Football Premiership: Newcastle United 3 Middlesbrough 1

Newcastle take the top spot again

Michael Walker

ONLY Liverpool or Middlesbrough could have prevented Newcastle returning to the top of the Premiership on Sunday. In the end neither could do the necessary, so Newcastle leapfrogged Arsenal to go top, a position they occupied last month after that startling Manchester United game.

If that was Newcastle's champagne moment, then this was their brown ale afternoon. The atmosphere was rowdy from start to finish and it was fitting that the teetotal Peter Beardsley, making his 700th League and Cup appearance, should prove the difference between the sides.

He scored two goals, one a penalty shortly before half-time, the other midway through the second half, and came close to a hat-trick 15 minutes from time when Walsh pushed his shot over the bar.

Newcastle drew immediate consolation from the resulting corner, Robert Lee's shot from the edge of the area taking a huge deflection from Vickers and flying wide of the stranded and unfortunate Walsh for their third goal.

Middlesbrough, though understandably deflated, at least managed a reply two minutes from time when Danish international Mikkel Beck gave a glossy finish to Phil Stamp's earnest run, clipping the ball delicately over the advancing Srnicek.

It was the goal of the game and provided some evidence for Bryan Robson's view that his side had contributed much of the passion to this contest and did not deserve to be on the wrong end of such a scoreline.

The unusual quartet of Emerson, Juninho, Stamp and Mustoe gave them a grip in the torrid opening that saw a series of niggling confrontations. Robson rose from the bench to complain about a fifth-minute challenge by Batty on Emerson. Cox was booked for a reckless lunge at Elliott, who took a measure of revenge on Beck and also saw yellow. Batty, unsurprisingly, was booked too.

Newcastle were rattled, but Boro failed to create chances. Four minutes before halftime Stamp, making his only mistake of the afternoon, was robbed by Elliott. Beardsley seized on the loose ball and via Asprilla it arrived at Ginola's feet. The Frenchman charged at Cox, who dived in, bringing Ginola down. Beardsley made no mistake with a shot straight down the middle.

There was still time before the break for Gillespie to force a fine save from Walsh. Gillespie was again included in a Kevin Keegan line-up packed with forwards and, although the Irishman has plenty of defending to do in this three-at-the-back formation, he is clearly responding to the challenge.

After the interval Boro's hold slipped further and Ginola and Ferdinand both went close. There was still the odd squaring-up but none as unlikely as when Juninho headed for Albert. The diminutive Brazilian came off worse and was still protesting about it when Beardsley skipped past several red shirts to sidefoot his second goal into the corner.



Going for goal . . . the Newcastle striker Les Ferdinand makes a determined effort to get the ball as the Middlebrough defender Derek Whyte closes in during the home side's 3-1 victory PHOTO: MICHAEL STEELE

Football results

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Aston Villa 2, Nottingham Forest 0; Blackburn 3, Liverpool 0; Derby County 2, Leicester 0; Leeds 3, Sunderland 0; Man United 1, Chelsea 2; Newcastle 3, Middlesbrough 1; Sheffield Wed 1, Southampton 1; Tottenham 1, West Ham 0, Wimbledon 2, Arsenal 2. **Leading positions:** 1, Newcastle (played 12, points 27); 2, Arsenal (12-25); 3, Wimbledon (12-23).

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: First Division: Bolton 2, Huddersfield 0; Bradford 0, Oldham 3; Grimsby 2, Sheffield United 4; Norwich 1, Charlton 2; Oxford 3, Ipswich 1; Portsmouth 4, W B A 0; Port Vale 3, Birmingham 0; Q P R 1, Stoke 1; Southend 2, Reading 1; Swindon 2, Man City 0; Tranmere 1, Crystal Palace 3; Wolves 3, Barnsley 3. **Leading positions:** 1, Bolton (16-37); 2, Norwich (16-31); 3, Crystal Palace (16-30).

Second Division: Bournemouth 1, Bury 1; Bristol Rovers 0, Gillingham 0, Crewe 3, Wycombe 0; Millwall 1, Walsall 0, Notts County 1, Shrewsbury 2; Peterborough 0, Blackpool 0, Plymouth 3, Luton 3; Preston 0, Rotherham 0; Stockport 1, Bristol City 1; Watford 2, Brentford 0; Wrexham 3, Chesterfield 2; York 1, Burnley 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Millwall (17-34); 2, Brentford (17-32); 2, Crewe (17-31)

Third Division: Carlisle 0, Wigan 3; Colchester 1, Cardiff 1; Darlington 1, Scarborough 1; Doncaster 0, Chester 1; Fulham 1, Lincoln 2, Hartlepool 2, Brighton 3; Hereford 1, Barnet 1; Hull 1, Cambridge 3; Leyton Orient 1, Torquay 0; Mansfield 2, Scunthorpe 0; Rochdale 2, Exeter 0, Swansea 1, Northampton 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Fulham (17-37); 2, Cambridge United (17-33); 3, Wigan (17-32).

SCOTTISH LEAGUE: CHALLENGE CUP: Final: Stranraer 1, St Johnstone 0.

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Celtic 1, Aberdeen 0, Hearts 2, Dunfermline 0; Motherwell 1, Dundee U 3, Raith 2, Rangers 2. **Leading positions:** 1, Celtic (11-26); 2, Rangers (11-26); 3, Aberdeen (11-18)

First Division: Clydebank 0, Falkirk 1; Dundee 0, St Mirren 1; Morton 1, Airdrie 1, Stirling A 1, Partick 2. **Leading positions:** 1, Airdrie (12-21); 2, Dundee (12-21); 3, St Johnstone (11-2[illegible]

Second Division: Berwick 0, Hamilton 2, Clyde 2, Ayr 3; Livingston 5, Dumbarton 0, Stenhousemuir 2, Queen of South 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Ayr (12-29); 2, Livingston (12-2[illegible] 3, Hamilton (12-24).

Third Division: Albion 1, Arbroath 0, Cowdenbeath 2, Alloa 0; East Stirling 0, Inverness 0; Montrose 3, Queen's Park 2, Ross County 1, Forfar 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Cowdenbeath (12-23); 2, Albion (12-22); 3, Montrose (12-20)

Cryptic crossword by Fidelio

Across

8 It's supposed to be placed at tea-time, sweetheart (8)
9 & 22a Part of the Houdini contract? (6, 6)
10 Laurel's second cure (4)
11 Bar instructions — swift justice? (5, 5)
12 Hold the queen to be a complainer (6)
14 One follower looked at Janus, say (3-5)
15 This time, Jean's day, January 3rd is put back (7)
17 Show like "The Band Wagon" that carried one away? (7)
20 Fancy two drinks first and cards? (3, 5)
22 See 9
23 Such evidence is of the end (10)
24 Men on board are cut (4)
25 Pole position, thanks to game (6)
26 Lank's allowed to be thrown down (8)

Down

1 Pearl could be sophisticated (8)
2 Principal ocean (4)
3 German who is not overweight? (6)
4 Go between broadcasters and those ends (7)
5 Welsh and English students have completed to gain approval (4, 4)
6 Mark "L"'s article denoting fever (10)
7 A firearm for each (6)
13 One lengthens for caterpillar (10)
16 Artist and Frenchman save an exotic fruit (8)
18 Resilient sort, one hears (8)
19 Second year in Georgia when the lilac blooms (7)
21 One pressing on in anger, runs (6)
22 Little fox captures her, sweet child (6)
24 Name what's said to be the construction area (4)

Last week's solution

Tennis Paris Open

Enqvist's warning to France

Richard Jago in Paris

THOMAS ENQVIST overwhelmed the fourth seeded Yevgeny Kafelnikov 6-2, 6-4, 7-5 to win the Paris Open on Sunday and deny the Russian a hat-trick of French titles this year.

The Swede's victory, his first in a "super nine" tournament — events which offer more than $2 million in prize-money — took him back into the top 10 and suggested he might be the dominant figure in the Davis Cup final against France at the end of the month.

"I played probably the best match of my life," said the No 12 seed, who did not drop a set throughout the tournament. "I was in a zone today. I felt like I couldn't lose." However, his assessment was something of an exaggeration as Kafelnikov's form was far from that which won him the French Open and the Lyon indoor event.

Kafelnikov began so poorly that the first set was over in only 21 minutes. He continued little better, losing a break in the opening game of the next set and frittering away a 3-0 lead in the third.

His worst mistake was a forehand volley into the net from high above it, allowing Enqvist to break back to 2-3. After that the result was hardly in doubt.

Enqvist consolidated the break back with three aces in the next game. He served four more in the 12th game, three of them in a row, to finish the contest with a flourish. It was, though, the only flamboyant moment of a disappointing final.

Kafelnikov had been on court until eight o'clock the night before, winning a long doubles semi-final after an arduous singles. His intense desire to make as much money as possible ($168,000 was the doubles first prize) almost certainly cost him his chances of an important title. He is guaranteed to rise to No 3 in the world despite this. If he wins this week in Moscow, as he is seeded to do, he should climb to within 500 points of Pete Sampras.

Enqvist by contrast has carefully paced his improvement after an inconsistent first half to 1996. He is the eighth Swede to reach the top 10 and, with Stefan Edberg retiring this month, his country's focus will be on him more intensely than ever. On Sunday's evidence he looks secure enough to withstand the pressure.

● Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic won her second consecutive tournament, beating American Jennifer Capriati 6-4, 3-6, 6-1 in the final of the Ameritech Cup in Chicago.

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Week ending November 17, 1996

UK defies Europe on 48-hour week

Michael White

JOHN MAJOR this week raised the stakes in his running battle over the 48-hour working week when he warned his European partners that the Cabinet will not back down on the issue — because it shows how Britain is getting economic policy right and they have got it wrong.

The British prime minister was speaking on the eve of a judgment from the European Court of Justice which rejected London's appeal against enforcement of the working time directive.

Mr Major said he would veto the outcome of the Maastricht review conference next summer — if he is still in office — unless the law is changed to prevent similar "back-door" social legislation.

Meanwhile Britain will "symbolically" obey the directive when it comes into force on November 23, and will not boycott European Union negotiations, Downing Street officials stressed.

In a speech that came close to exemplifying the boastful, nationalistic posture Mr Major purported to deplore, an upbeat Prime Minister told the annual Lord Mayor's Banquet at Guildhall that 17 years of low tax, privatised and deregulating economic reforms had put Britain "back in the first rank".

Though Mr Major believes he can outface them, the Franco-German alliance remains determined not to let one of the 15 member states block progress on reforming its institutions at next June's summit in Amsterdam.

The nub of Mr Major's case is that "low social costs, no Social Chapter and no minimum wage" have given Britain all the flexible advantages Europe lacks. "That is why the working time directive represents an important point of principle," said Mr Major, who insisted that issues such as the 48-hour working week were "best resolved between employer and employee".

In his crucial passage, he said: "If the court rules against us, we will require changes in European law to reinforce Britain's protection from such legislation. Our partners know that. And they know that we shall insist upon these changes before we can conclude any new agreement [in Amsterdam]."

With Michael Heseltine and other ministers also talking up the feel-good factor at a conference of business leaders in Harrogate, Mr Major rattled through the familiar list of Tory achievements to insist that, this time, the recovery would not stall.

"If that is so, it is a change of historic importance," he told his City audience, citing privatisation, deregulation and inward investment among his successes. "As a result, we are pulling ahead of the European field."

In its ruling on Tuesday the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg rejected Britain's argument that the law, which sets a maximum average work week of 48 hours, had been improperly adopted as a health and safety measure.

Britain had argued that the directive should be thrown out because it was wrongly adopted under health and safety rules, which require support of only a majority of EU countries, instead of under EU rules requiring unanimity. Britain opted out of the Maastricht treaty's Social Chapter to avoid just such restrictions on working arrangements.

The shadow foreign secretary, Robin Cook, said: "John Major's threat to renew non-co-operation has nothing to do with protecting business and everything to do with pandering to Eurosceptic opinion."

Larry Elliott, page 16



Zaireans beat back hungry residents in Goma as they queue at a UN warehouse

Canada prepared to lead Zaire force

Chris McGreal in Goma and agencies

CANADA offered this week to lead a multinational force to help end the crisis in eastern Zaire and bring vital relief to more than a million Hutu refugees displaced by four weeks of fighting, United Nations sources said in New York.

Canada's intervention came as Laurent Kabila, the leader of the Rwandan-backed rebels who have seized parts of eastern Zaire, threatened a renewed attack on a large refugee camp unless the international community sends troops to neutralise Hutu extremists.

South Africa would also be prepared to send troops as part of an international force, President Nelson Mandela said in a television interview on Monday. He said he would send a delegation to the region to gather information.

Meanwhile the United States, a crucial player in any UN decision to send troops to Central Africa, denied it was blocking the creation of an international force but said it had still not seen a coherent plan for assembling one.

In Goma, the provincial capital seized by rebels earlier this month, Mr Kabila appeared to be laying the groundwork for breaking his own ceasefire in order to launch a new onslaught against Hutu militias using Rwandan refugees as a shield.

Speaking as the first humanitarian aid dribbled into rebel-held areas on Monday, Mr Kabila, who heads the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, warned that the war was about to escalate because Hutu extremists in the Mugunga refugee camp were continuing to shell Goma.

He said he would accept an international force only from countries he deemed neutral. Nations such as Sweden would be acceptable but he would prefer troops from African countries such as Mali, Zimbabwe or Ethiopia. French soldiers would be presumed hostile because of Paris's support for Zaire's president, Mobutu Sésé Séko.

In Goma, there are mixed emotions about the surly young men wandering the streets with Kalashnikovs over their shoulders. Some say they welcome the rebels as less abusive than the Zairean forces that fled. Goma was always an ugly town, but suspicions run deep among the people: "We are glad to see the Zairean army gone," said Theoneste, a young moneychanger. "They were always drunk. That is why they did not fight. But these rebels are all Rwandans. We can hear it from the way they talk. So what do they want here? We are not Tutsis. We are not like them."

Martin Woollacott, page 14
Le Monde, page 17

Hostile Congress squares up to Clinton

Martin Walker in Washington

DESPITE the appeals for "common ground" from President Clinton and Republican congressional leaders, an array of flash-points lie in store for the new administration which are likely to put it at loggerheads with the Republican Congress very soon.

The first confrontations could come before Christmas, as the re-elected president sends up his new cabinet nominees to the Senate for its approval. Now even more firmly in Republican hands after they won two extra seats, with a 55-45 majority, the Senate can veto the appointments and embarrass him with its questioning.

This prospect may already have saved the job of the attorney-general, Janet Reno, who runs the justice department, and is responsible for opening legal inquiries into such controversial matters as the Clinton campaign's dubious fund-raising from Indonesian, Iraqi-American and Russian business sources.

To replace Ms Reno would mean any new appointee being grilled in public on his or her approach to the various Clinton scandals, from Whitewater to the new campaign finance controversies.

There will be Senate confirmation hearings into a range of new officials, from secretary of state to the secretaries of defence, commerce, transport and energy following the post-election shakeout and resignations last week. Mr Clinton's awareness of the Senate hurdle is a strong factor in his decision to recruit Republicans to his cabinet.

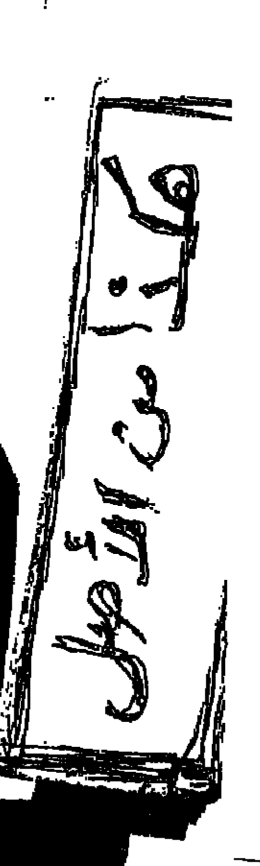
But even a Republican senator like Richard Lugar or former general Colin Powell, serious candidates to replace Warren Christopher or William Perry, can expect tough questions on how long US troops will stay in Bosnia. Nominees for both the state department and commerce will be grilled on relations with Indonesia, after the fuss over the generosity of the Indonesia-based Riady family to the Clinton campaign.

Senator Alfonse D'Amato, chairman of the banking committee, confirmed on Monday that he would drop his Whitewater inquiry. This leaves matters in the hands of the special counsel, Kenneth Starr, who runs the continuing legal inquiries into Whitewater, Travelgate and Filegate (about the misuse of FBI files on Republicans).

Outside Congress, the supreme court is expected to give the go-ahead to the Paula Jones sexual harassment case against Mr Clinton.

The US this week, page 6
Comment, page 14

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 400	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30



Consumers will always be blinded by scientists

YOUR letter writers on the issue of genetic engineering (November 3) seem to believe a well informed public can and should decide what direction we will take in our role as free "consumers".

On the contrary. The public will never be well informed about international economics, or about technical aspects of bio-engineering, or on philosophical questions about tampering with bio-diversity. Only our instincts and a parade of tragedies and absurdities like nuclear bombs, thalidomide, mad cow disease, or the battery chicken ranches help us resist the scientific onslaught on nature.

The suggestion that we have no choice but to consider bio-engineering as an option if we are to feed the masses is rubbish. There is abundance on Earth, and only all the rationalisations of the greed and restless curiosity of the well-off, and our strenuous efforts to destroy and waste wealth, prevent more from having modest helpings.

But I am not surprised that these sorcerer's apprentices would use flattery of consumer choice, the most debased of our uses of free will, as a scapegoat for any future tragedy.
J W Beveridge,
Ottawa, Canada

MICHAEL DURHAM comments on the dangers of genetically engineered foods, highlighted by the present controversy over labelling regulations for US corn and soybean, genetically modified to possess herbicide and insect resistance (Scrambled gene cuisine for dinner, October 20).

At issue is the continued spread of misinformation, fuelled in part by the media, which seemingly refuses to attempt public education on this issue. First, all food we eat contains DNA. We, like other animals, are perfectly equipped to digest it and re-use its building stones for our own metabolism.

Such digestion destroys the essence of the DNA, which is not its chemistry but the information contained in the order of its building stones.

Second, your article suggests that one danger comes from the spread of herbicide resistance genes to weeds. Corn and soybean imported into Europe are unlikely to find any weeds with which to mate. The progenitors of these crops are neither weeds nor are they found in Europe.

Third, why is the public so concerned about labelling, when it readily accepts foodstuffs marketed after exposure to a variety of fungicides, pesticides, and herbicides? Potatoes sold in store do not carry a label indicating their recent history of chemical treatment.

Fourth, why do we see such intellectual inconsistency in the environmental lobby, when tobacco smoking and personal use of leaded petrol is common among its own members?

Fifth, we have seen little effort by the environmental groups to sponsor actual research in these areas. Why are all the funds raised from citizens and user groups used for political and not educational and scientific purposes.

I am the last one who would advocate a blind rush into a new technology. I also want to have a planet that supports life of quality and productivity. As a society we need to make decisions; these must be based on rational thought and not misinformation. While science so often seems like the anti-Christ to us, we all seem to accept its fruits when it comes to infections, cold houses, and spoilt food.

Not all science is fuelled by a profit-motive. Monsanto indeed wants to make money; so do we all. But Monsanto has been very careful to conduct a multiplicity of experiments to study allerginicity, frequency of antibiotic resistance gene transfer, horizontal gene transfer, etc. All these issues should be aired to the public, which seems to be confused by beach-ball plastic tomatoes inflated in protest and a residual fear that genetics relates to eugenics and social engineering.
Peter M Gresshoff,
Knoxville, Tennessee, USA

Fight against right's agenda

MARTIN WOOLLACOTT states (October 27) that the New Right's message has "seeped into the collective mind". I would rather say it has been dinned in by a capitalist press that, in North America at least, has promoted it incessantly while denying a forum to counter-arguments.

While they still saw communism as a threat, Western governments and business found it expedient to temper the worst excesses of capitalism. Since the Berlin Wall collapsed, all bets have been off.

The question now is how long people will continue to sit still for the destruction of their jobs, their social safety net and many other institutions that, in more enlightened times, were thought to distinguish the 20th century from the free-market anarchy of previous eras.

New Zealand's election may be a sign that they will not do so much longer. In Canada, 80,000 Ontarians marched recently against the slash-and-burn policies of a New Right provincial government that is making room for tax cuts by targeting single mothers, pensioners, education and health care. By the standard of, say, a 1930s bread riot it was a polite affair. But no one should mistake politeness for lack of determination.
David North,
Toronto, Canada

Drug blunders in Gulf war

YOUR story that British troops were exposed to far more pesticides in the Gulf war than hitherto reported may indicate multiple blunders by the Ministry of Defence (Gulf soldiers exposed to pesticide, October 13). Accounts of application methods range from aerial spraying of tents through to ground spraying by medical staff without protective equipment.

Even in the 1980s there were clear recommendations not to breathe in the spray mist of pesticides like fenitrothion which were used in the Gulf. Troops may have been well advised to put on their "germ warfare" masks and clothes to protect themselves when spraying or being sprayed with insecticides containing organophosphates (OPs).

OPs, such as fenitrothion and malathion, were also well established by 1991 as pesticides which could become more toxic when combined with other chemicals. It will be important to establish what risk assessements the MoD drew up before the Gulf war to ensure the safest possible selection and application of pesticides.

Again, it was standard good occupational-hygiene practice in the 1980s and early 1990s to consider how chemicals like pesticides would react with prescribed drugs. As many of the armed forces at work in the Gulf were apparently taking anti-nerve-gas drugs like pyridostigmine on instruction from the MoD, it should have automatically been asked how such medication would react with the pesticides. We now know that the inter-reaction was damaging. If the MoD did not know what the reaction was in 1991, personnel should not have been exposed to a potential risk without adequate information and protection.
(Dr) Andrew Watterson,
Director, Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health,
De Montfort University, Leicester

Few tears for Gro Brundtland

TO DECLARE without reservation that our former prime minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland, has been "hugely popular" (Brundtland decides to step down, November 3), must be described as an overstatement. As a consequence of her Labour government's liberal policy, she has been applauded by rightwing politicians, as well as by conservative newspapers in Oslo, where she herself originates.

While Ms Brundtland has scored abroad with smiles and an open purse, her party has lost supporters in Norway. Vital investments are neglected for the benefit of a so-called "petroleum fund" placed in allegedly profitable investments abroad. A majority in Norway maintains that more money should be spent in our own country, especially in health, education, roads and railways.
Einar Grannes,
Trondheim, Norway

A ghost in the machine?

SOME months ago, my mother-in-law was mugged and her bag stolen (Plot to rob cash dispensers put banking system at risk, November 10). With it went her bank cards, but this was not a worry because the mugger did not have her PIN number. It still resided in its original envelope at home, unopened.

Despite this, £100 was withdrawn within an hour. Impossible, said her bank, she must have had a record of her PIN in her bag. Even after showing them the unopened envelope, the customer service people insisted the withdrawal was impossible.

They were, of course, following the line peddled by all banks on phantom withdrawals — they just cannot happen. Since then, we have had a gang convicted for an ATM scam and now the hole in the wall gang. But if the ATM system is thief-proof how could these prosecutions be brought? And since they have, what happens to the banks' claim of the impossibility of breaching the system? Roll on the first lawsuit against a bank over a phantom withdrawal; I can't wait to hear the defence argument.
Peter Minton,
Whitchurch-on-Thames, Reading

Briefly

ALISON YOUNG (October 27) appears to have overlooked the fact that at the conclusion of the investigation into the tragic death of Mrs Joy Gardner three officers faced charges of manslaughter before a jury at the Old Bailey. It was that jury which acquitted the officers rather than the Police Complaints Authority.

The only conclusion to be drawn from that is that the Crown Prosecution Service believed there was a case to answer in respect of the criminal charge, but the jury, who have the ultimate decision, came to the conclusion that the evidence did not support the charge to the required standard of proof.
P W Moorhouse,
Police Complaints Authority, London

I NOTED in your heart-warming story (Clare Short and son reunited, October 27) that you referred to Ms Short as Mr Graham's "real" mother. Mr Graham's adoptive mother, too, has a considerable claim to that title. Far better to call Ms Graham his "biological" mother and not make a judgment about who is a "real" mother.
David Simpson,
Brookfield, Illinois, USA

I APPLAUD the editorial decision to put the news of the East Timorese prize winners on the front page (October 20), but in what sense is the Nobel Committee's decision "overtly political"?

The decision last spring not to allow an Amnesty radio appeal on the grounds that it too was "political" seems to suggest that this idea risks being dangerously undefined. Something cannot be termed "political" simply because it has an effect on politics, otherwise we could simply use this word to describe all of life.
Andrew Fynn,
Takahama, Aichi, Japan

I MUST ruefully contest Victoria Clarke's assertion that "any band, however awful or unpopular, will have groupies who are willing to sleep with them" (The wife and soul, October 27). In 15 years slaving over a hot keyboard in reasonably awful and unpopular bands in France and the USA, I have never been propositioned.
Jeremy C Smith,
Baskervilles Blues Band,
Chateaufort, France

I DO NOT understand when violence is acceptable or unacceptable to the footballing fraternity. When Eric Cantona kicks a fan at a televised football match, he is universally condemned and suspended from playing. When Paul Gascoigne beats up his wife in a hotel room, he is selected to represent his country.
Kitty Guthrie,
East Sussex

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Clinton likely to hold fire on Cuba bill

Jonathan Freedland

THE Clinton administration is likely to delay once again the toughest of its anti-Cuba measures, White House sources said on Monday, as Washington's policy toward the communist regime came under fire from the leaders of Latin America, Spain and Portugal.

Administration officials signalled that when President Clinton reviews the Helms-Burton law — which punishes overseas companies with trade links to Cuba — he will extend the suspension of Title III, which allows US citizens to sue foreign companies holding property seized during Cuba's 1959 revolution.

Mr Clinton signed Helms-Burton — named after its two Republican sponsors — in March, but in July froze the lawsuits' clause for six months. The waiver comes up for renewal in January.

Officially, Washington is seeking proof that its foreign allies are taking their own action against Havana before it will agree to suspend Title III again. But one national security official said this week he was "very cautiously optimistic" that the allies had done enough to keep the measure on ice. "We hope that's the direction it's heading in," he said.

The move came as participants at the sixth annual Ibero-American summit in the Chilean capital, Santiago, jointly condemned the law. In their first such concerted action, the 23 leaders urged the US to "reconsider the application of the law, which goes against international principles".

Along with Washington's European allies, the Latin American countries have opposed Helms-Burton as "extraterritorial", seeking to impose US will on foreign countries. The European Union is challenging the law in a newly created court established under the World Trade Organisation. Britain has been particularly vociferous in its opposition.

Washington has appointed Stuart Eizenstat, a former ambassador to the EU and current commerce department official, as a special envoy to placate anger over the Helms-Burton affair. He faces an uphill task: he was pelted with eggs when he arrived in Mexico on his first diplomatic shuttle mission.

Several of America's allies had hoped a re-elected Mr Clinton might soften his stance on Cuba. He had initially opposed Helms-Burton, agreeing to sign it only when Havana sparked a furore by shooting down two planes piloted by Cuban-American activists off the island's coast last February.

Diplomats reckoned Mr Clinton made the move to win over vocal emigré Cuban communities in the electorally crucial states of New Jersey and Florida, both of which he carried last week. With that pressure removed, some observers hoped he might push Helms-Burton aside and even reconsider the 35-year-old economic embargo on Cuba.

But White House sources warned this week that was unlikely, and Washington would maintain its current two-track policy of cutting ties with the Cuban government while trying to strengthen links with the Cuban people. To that end, the administration hopes to loosen the rules on non-governmental, academic, religious and media contacts with Havana — as it did before the February shootdown.

A supporter of Castro brandishes his photograph, taken with the late Chilean president Salvador Allende, at a rally in Santiago, Chile PHOTOGRAPH: JOSE AGURTO

EU reneging on trade deal, says Pretoria

Sarah Ryle

BRITAIN and its European partners are threatening the future of South Africa's fledgling democracy, a senior member of Nelson Mandela's ruling African National Congress said this week.

The European Union is accused of reneging on a promise made just after President Mandela's election two years ago to offer favourable trading terms on a wide range of South African exports.

Rob Davies, chairman of the South African parliament's trade and industry committee, warned of serious economic consequences if Europe succeeds in excluding 40 per cent of South Africa's key products from a free trade agreement.

His current visit to Britain, on the invitation of the Anti-Apartheid Movement's successor body, Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA), is aimed at preparing the ground for the deputy president, Thabo Mbeki, who is due in Britain next week.

Mr Mbeki is expected to call on John Major to campaign on South Africa's behalf against restrictions which Germany, France and Mediterranean countries are understood to have demanded. They are said to have been influenced by their farming lobbies and former colonies, which are in direct competition with South African producers.

Mr Davies said: "There is a very great discrepancy between the 95 per cent of European imports which the EU is proposing South Africa accepts under the free trade agreement and the 60 per cent of our exports they are willing to accept.

"It is insufficiently sensitive to the development needs of South and southern Africa and is not taking account of the process of transition and restructuring. It will have a very, very significant impact on unemployment. We sense a gap between the expression of support and the reality."

Pretoria's anger at the terms offered is particularly acute because the Free Trade Area (FTA) was proposed by the EU to help South Africa return to the global market place after the relaxation of apartheid-era sanctions. It was also intended to accelerate the opening up of its highly-protected economy.

Mr Mandela's government was expecting a reciprocal arrangement and this week's attack in London will further fuel the trade row which was sparked in March when the EU published its proposals.

After consultation with member states, the EU mandate excluded 40 per cent of South African exports from negotiations, including fresh fruit, processed fruit and wine.

● A clash between the South African government and Archbishop Desmond Tutu's truth commission was defused after talks ended with agreement that anti-apartheid activists would apply for amnesty for human rights abuses.

The Nobel prize-winner had threatened to resign from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission after a provincial leader of the ANC, Mathews Phosa, insisted that there was no need for ANC combatants to apply for amnesty, because they had been fighting a "just war" against apartheid.

Indonesia on Aids alert

John Aglionby in Jakarta

THE increase in Aids in Indonesia will have a catastrophic impact on traditional family life within the next three years unless drastic action is taken immediately, a study by health researchers says.

Their report, published last week, says that up to 31,000 people are dying each year from Aids-related illnesses and that more than 500,000 children will lose their parents to the syndrome by 2000.

It contradicts health ministry statistics published in September showing 439 reported cases of HIV and Aids, and 66 deaths.

International organisations and some government officials say the real number of Aids sufferers is in the thousands, but this is the first time anyone has tried to quantify the death rate.

Melwita Iskandar, director of the Centre for Health Research at the University of Indonesia, and co-ordinator of the report, believes the absence of an efficient monitoring system is adding to the problem.

"A surveillance system should be established to help detect cases before people have developed full-blown Aids," she said.

She is worried about the fate of the 550,000 children the report predicts will be orphaned by the disease in the next three years.

"These orphans are not likely to grow up with a normal family life and there is a possibility that they will become sexually active much earlier than usual."

The Indonesian government has yet to comment on the report. Its policies are governed by its Muslim leaders' strong objections to promoting condoms in Aids campaigns.

The health minister, Suyudi, was quoted by the official Antara news agency as saying that a government campaign backing the use of condoms was not culturally acceptable.

"The most suitable method for us is counselling and not distributing condoms," he told a meeting of the Indonesian Medical Association. He added that the government would distribute condoms in red-light districts. The country's family planning programme concentrates on promoting oral and implant contraceptives for married couples.

Indonesia's population of 195 million is the fourth largest in the world.

Kartono Mohamad, vice-chairman of the Indonesia Aids Foundation, said the disease was rampant throughout the country's 17,500 islands because doctors found it difficult to recognise.

"The virus is very good at disguising its symptoms, which are often similar to other prevalent illnesses such as hepatitis, tuberculosis or diarrhoea," he said.

Anger as mob attacks Suu Kyi

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Bangkok

A SENIOR Burmese official this week sought to distance the junta from attacks by a mob on the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's motorcade at the weekend, after the incidents drew strong condemnation from foreign governments, which Rangoon is trying to cultivate.

With the prospect of the junta coming under renewed international pressure to change, the official described the thuggery as "an act of sabotage" which the government was investigating. Observers believe the mob was orchestrated by the government.

"If it were set up by the government, why should we pick such an inopportune time when everything was running so smoothly?" the official said, suggesting the attacks might have been staged by Ms Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy. This is unlikely, however, as the two attacks happened near each other, and in areas where there was a heavy security presence.

Diplomats in Rangoon said the incidents could not have happened without official sanction and marked a new tactic in the long campaign of intimidation of the opposition.

The United States described the attacks as "extremely disturbing". It urged the junta to punish those responsible and to ensure Ms Suu Kyi's safety.

John McCain, the Republican senator who met the junta's powerful secretary-general, Lieutenant-General Khin Nyunt, on Monday, said the attacks were "unacceptable" and urged the junta to commit itself to a timetable for drafting a new constitution and holding elections.

The US has banned visas for members of the junta and their families, and Congress has passed a bill authorising the president to impose economic sanctions if Ms Suu Kyi is harmed or if the junta steps up pressure on the opposition.

Japan described the incidents as "extremely regrettable" and said it would ask the junta to show restraint in its dealings with Ms Suu Kyi.

On Monday, the European Parliament was shown a videotaped appeal by Ms Suu Kyi for economic sanctions. She also warned that public tolerance in Burma was wearing thin and European countries should act before it was too late.

One big concern for the junta is the reaction of Asean (the Association of South-East Asian Nations). Burma is seeking to become a full member next year, but the attacks are likely to add to the unease voiced by Thailand and the Philippines, which are both Asean members.

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The Week

EXASPERATED federal officials have denied persistent rumours that TWA 800 was accidentally shot down by a US navy missile. Pierre Salinger, President Kennedy's White House spokesman, claimed he had evidence that the airliner was brought down by US forces.

A CAR bomb exploded in an Algiers suburb on Sunday, killing at least 15 people and wounding 30.

CLAUDE Ake, one of Nigeria's leading critics of Shell and the oil industry, was among 141 passengers and crew who died when their Boeing-727 crashed near Lagos last week.

TURKEY'S interior minister, Mehmet Agar, resigned after a scandal that pointed to links between the powerful security apparatus and a gangster wanted for political killings and drug dealings.

IN A DRAMATIC twist to the appeals of convicted former South Korean presidents Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo, the Korean high court said it would force a third former head of state, Choi Kyu-hah, to appear.

FOUR Hells Angels and two gang supporters are on trial for one of the Nordic biker war murders, amid the tightest security seen in a Danish court.

GUATEMALA has reached a peace agreement with the guerrilla movement that will end 36 years of fighting, President Alvaro Arzu said.

HOPES are fading fast for more than 1,300 fishermen missing after a cyclone devastated India's south-east coast. Officials said nearly 2,000 people are likely to have been killed by the rains, 110 mph winds and tidal waves.

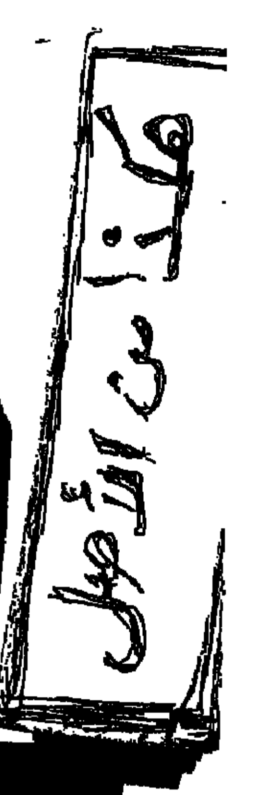
FIERCE fighting between the Islamic Taliban militia and their opponents has forced up to 50,000 people to flee their homes in north-west Afghanistan.

In the name of Allah, page 8

JORDAN has agreed to supply sanctions-hit Iraq with $35 million worth of urgently needed goods, the state news agency said.

WOMEN who smoke heavily could be up to four times as likely to develop breast cancer, according to research that claims, for the first time, a link between tobacco and the disease.

A VOLCANIC eruption sent clouds of smoke billowing 500m above Iceland, a day after a flood wreaked havoc on the east of the island. The eruption was a follow-up to sub-glacial volcanic explosions last month that flooded Grimsvoton lake.



Child workers number 250 million

Seumas Milne

THE International Labour Organisation has doubled its estimate of the number of child workers worldwide to more than 250 million, and warned that exploitation of children in dangerous industrial employment and the sex trade is growing.

The scale of the problem is so great, a report out this week argues, that action must be targeted on the most intolerable forms of child labour — including that involving the youngest children — through a new ILO convention.

Assefa Bequele, the United Nations' top child labour expert, singled out the impact of IMF "structural adjustment" cuts programmes, the rapid transition to market economies in Asia and Eastern Europe, and the collapse of state structures in some parts of Africa as key factors feeding the growth of child employment.

The issue will be debated at next month's World Trade Organisation meeting in Singapore, where some states and trade unions will be pressing for a social clause in trade agreements banning child and forced labour.

The ILO report details the long hours and disease that child workers — concentrated in developing countries — are exposed to in mining, agriculture, ceramics and glass factories, deep-sea fishing, domestic services and construction. Some of the worst conditions are in factories producing goods for export under contract to Western-owned multinationals.

Children as young as three are reported to be working in firework and match factories across the Indian sub-continent.

The ILO's new figure of 250 million — 120 million of whom are said to be full-time — has been calculated using a household sample survey, and includes all children aged five to 14. Its 1995 estimate of 73 million was restricted to children aged between 10 and 14.

Domestic service is not included because of its "hidden" nature, and ILO statisticians accept that the true number is much higher. A recent study of Indonesia has estimated that there are 400,000 child domestic workers in Jakarta and 5 million in the country as a whole.

The report estimates that 61 per cent of child workers, nearly 153 million, are in Asia; 32 per cent or 80 million in Africa, where the highest proportions of children working can be found; and 18 million live in Latin America.

Serbs won't step down

Julian Borger in Sarajevo

TWO of the most senior Bosnian Serb military commanders are refusing to accept their dismissal by political leaders and have told Nato they will stay at their posts.

The Bosnian Serb president, Biljana Plavsic, sacked General Ratko Mladic, the wartime commander known as the "Butcher of the Balkans", and his general staff last week in an attempt to wrest control of the fiercely independent Serb army.

But General Zdravko Tolimir, the sacked general's deputy, arrived at Nato headquarters in Sarajevo on Monday morning and — according to Nato officers — told his opposite number there, Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Walker, that Gen Mladic would stay at his post.

Another high-ranking Serb officer, General Milan Gvero, told the Associated Press news agency that neither he, Gen Mladic, nor General Manojlo Milovanovic — who was also dismissed last week — intended to step down. Gen Gvero said that they would reject any attempt to remove them.

Bomb kills 13 at graveside

James Meek in Moscow

RUSSIA'S mobster battles reached a new pitch of horror on Sunday as a powerful bomb exploded among a crowd of veterans of the Afghan war and their families at a memorial service in Moscow, killing at least 13 people and wounding 18 more, including a child.

Investigators immediately ascribed the bomb to a *razborka* — a settling of accounts between criminal groups vying for control of the foundation's business activities.

Afghan veterans' groups benefited until recently from generous tax exemptions, intended to raise money to help soldiers disabled in the war. But before the exemptions were ended last year, the underworld and shady businessmen had exploited them for huge tax-free import-export operations.

● President Boris Yeltsin has left Moscow's cardiology research centre, to move to another hospital to continue his recovery from last week's quintuple heart bypass operation, officials said at the weekend.

Enomy within, page 30

A veteran peers at a tribute to fallen comrades in a Madrid cemetery

Old debt honoured

SIXTY years after volunteering to fight on the Republican side in the Spanish civil war, the International Brigades have finally received popular recognition from a country wary of its painful past but now mature enough to recognise the debt it owes them, *writes Adela Gooch in Madrid*.

A week of tributes attended by 370 veterans, some in Spain for the first time since the fighting ending, culminated in Barcelona and other cities at the weekend.

The former Socialist prime minister, Felipe González, at a ceremony at the party's Madrid headquarters,0 accused the governing conservative Popular Party of distancing itself from the 10-day round of events. Neither the PP president of parliament nor his deputy were present at a reception held in the chamber.

But the accusation was not entirely fair. Even after the death of General Franco and the election of a Socialist government, International Brigades organisations had to fight hard for recognition from a society which prefers to look forward.

Earlier this year, however, parliament voted to keep the republican prime minister Juan Negrín's promise of Spanish nationality to all brigades veterans.

Historians estimate that 40,000 foreigners fought for the republican government after Franco's 1936 military uprising.



Pentagon acts on sex scandal at camp

Bradley Graham in Washington

THE Pentagon's top military officer said on Monday that the army is casting a wide net to determine how serious a sexual misconduct problem it has in the wake of allegations of abusive behaviour by supervisors at a major training facility in Aberdeen, Maryland.

"We certainly have to assume that it could be happening somewhere else," Gen John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said. "And that's why the army is casting its net very wide all across the army, and certainly all training centres, to get to the bottom of this. But right now I don't think we have yet all the evidence. It's very difficult to determine just how big that problem really is."

In appearances on several television shows on Monday marking Veteran's Day, Gen Shalikashvili echoed the outrage and commitment to seeing justice done that have been expressed by other senior defence officials since charges of rape and other sexual crimes were announced last week against trainers at the Aberdeen proving ground's ordnance centre.

The investigation has resulted in charges against a company commander and two drill sergeants, administrative action against two other sergeants and suspension of an additional 15 military supervisors at the centre, which teaches maintenance skills to recruits fresh out of basic training.

"My sense is also that we don't know yet the extent of this tragic occurrence there," Gen Shalikashvili said. "But we have to, therefore, use all the energy that we have to follow every possible lead."

On Monday, more than 250 calls streamed into an army hotline set up to field complaints of sexual misconduct throughout the service, bringing the total since last week to nearly 2,000.

Officials said 145 complaints have been deemed serious enough by criminal investigators to warrant further inquiry. Of those, 56 were related to Aberdeen; the rest involved other army facilities.

"The majority of complaints come from training bases," one official said.

The only other major training facility mentioned by army officials so far as facing a possible cluster of sexual misconduct cases is Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri.

A criminal investigation is looking into allegations of sexual misconduct, but no charges have been brought. — *Washington Post*

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BP seeking inquiry into rights abuses

David Harrison

OIL GIANT BP has urged the Colombian government to investigate allegations that its employees are collaborating with the army and its paramilitary allies in gross violations of human rights.

The request marks a change in BP's attitude. Previously, the company had dismissed the claims, made in a leaked, unpublished government report. The allegations were debated in the European Parliament and reiterated in Bogotá and the oil-producing Casanare region last week.

In a letter to Attorney-General Alfonso Valdivieso, BP's executive director, John Doust, says he will make available any information necessary to help a government inquiry into BP's links with paramilitaries, death squads and human rights abuses.

The letter, released to the Colombian but not the British press, makes clear BP's displeasure at not seeing a copy of the report until a year after it was completed, in July 1995. Mr Doust said it was "a real surprise" for BP to discover the existence of a report that contained allegations the company had not been given an opportunity to contradict or clarify.

The report alleged that BP staff had passed "intelligence" on community leaders and strikers to military officials and that this had led to beatings, torture and murder. It also claimed the company had committed "grave environmental damage". BP denies the allegations.

BP sources in Casanare said it was "well known" that BP exchanged information with the military. It was "inevitable" that its own local security bosses were close to the army. "It's very likely head office hasn't got a clue what's happening on the ground," said one engineer.

Rights and community groups in Bogotá and Yopal, the main oil town in Casanare, welcomed BP's call for an investigation and called on President Ernesto Samper to launch a full judicial inquiry. But they feared BP's call was "an empty gesture", aimed at giving only the appearance of wanting an inquiry, and sceptical about the government's willingness to investigate.

BP's initial reaction to the allegations was to attack the status of the report as "an ad hoc local thing". But the presidential adviser, Carlos Vicente de Roux, said such reports were "a convenient mechanism to confront growing violence situations and violations of human rights".

BP pays the military a $1.25-a-barrel war tax and another $5.6 million in a three-year voluntary "agreement of co-operation", which it says is to improve troops' food, uniforms and accommodation. BP admits that relations with Casanare locals have been difficult, with strikes provoking clashes with police and military.

The army has one of the Western hemisphere's worst rights records. Its links with brutal paramilitaries are well documented, although officially denied. Amnesty International accused the army this month of widespread killing of community leaders and rights activists in the past decade. — *The Observer*

Australia bars Adams visit

David Sharrock in Belfast and Christopher Zinn in Sydney

PRESSURE is growing on the United States to follow Australia's lead and refuse an entry visa to the Sinn Fein president, Gerry Adams, because of his "intimate association" with the IRA.

Unionist leaders welcomed last week's Australian decision, which was taken because Mr Adams failed to meet the country's "good character" requirements, according to the country's immigration minister, Philip Ruddock.

He said: "Mr Adams continues to be intimately associated with the Provisional IRA, an organisation that continues to conduct criminal acts of terrorism and bombing." The ruling came as a book published at the weekend claimed that Mr Adams and other leading Sinn Feiners were on the IRA's seven-member ruling army council until October last year, more than 12 months after the IRA declared its ceasefire.

The Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, welcomed Australia's decision and said he would urge President Clinton to follow suit when he visited Washington soon.

There was no comment from Mr Adams, who was slightly injured in a car collision last week, but a Sinn Fein spokeswoman said that Australia had been heavily lobbied by Britain. Mr Adams had been intending to travel this week to Australia to promote his autobiography, Before The Dawn.

The book is due to be published in the US in February, and official sources have hinted that unless the IRA ceasefire is restored, there will be no further visas for the Sinn Fein president.

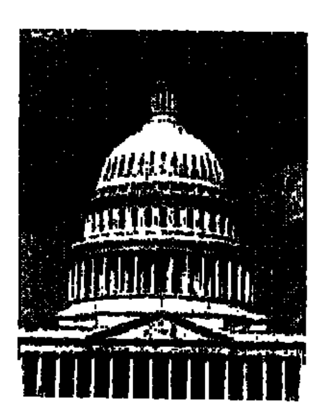
Phoenix, Policing The Shadows, the book in which Mr Adams is named as a top IRA figure, is based on the diaries of a senior RUC intelligence officer killed in the Mull of Kintyre Chinook disaster.

Ian Phoenix was head of the RUC's counter-surveillance unit at the time of his death and had spent some 25 years undercover.

On Friday last week, RTE, the Irish state broadcasting network, abruptly cancelled all scheduled radio and television interviews with the authors, Mr Phoenix's widow, Susan, and Jack Holland, a journalist. They were due to appear on the the top-rated Late Late Show, and on a lunchtime programme. Mrs Phoenix said it was because the book was the first to "tell the truth" about Northern Ireland and was in keeping with her late husband's experience of "agendas within agendas".

The book says that the security forces knew at the time of the Shankill bombing in October 1993 — in which nine Protestants and an IRA bomber were killed — that Mr Adams was a member of the IRA's army council.

Let battle for the heart of America begin



The US this week

Martin Walker

THE Republican party won the 1996 congressional election by not giving much of a hang about its presidential candidate, Bob Dole. Bill Clinton won the 1996 presidential election by not giving much of a hang about the Democratic party.

The result is that the Republican party now has to deal with the problems of congressional success without any obvious standard bearer to exploit it. And the Democrats have to deal with the horror of yet another failure in state and congressional elections while their own presidential standard bearer is plotting an agenda which threatens to dismay his party yet further.

The deceptive scale of Clinton's win in the Electoral College disguises the fact that in his rather disappointing re-election victory he lost more states than he gained. Thanks to the wave of fear about Republican threats to their Medicare health subsidies, the retirement communities helped him win Florida and Arizona, states he had lost to George Bush four years ago. But Bob Dole took Montana, Colorado and Georgia, three states Clinton had carried in 1992.

These were not the only Republican gains. They also gained two US Senate seats, one in Alabama, after the election of Howell Heflin, and the other in Clinton's state of Arkansas after the retirement of David Pryor. The Republicans also kept their grip on the House of Representatives, although their majority was weakened by the loss of 10 seats to Democrats.

Clinton can thank women and the elderly for his re-election. He won overwhelmingly among blacks, hispanics, women, under-30s and over-60s, and came so close to securing the personal mandate he had always craved — 50 per cent of the popular vote. The gender gap was the largest recorded since exit polls began, with 54 per cent of women voters plumping for Clinton, and 38 per cent for Dole. Among men, Clinton and Dole each won 44 per cent.

Had only whites voted, Dole would have won by a margin of 44-43 per cent. Dole beat Clinton by a margin of 49-38 among white males. Among white women Clinton's lead was reduced to 48-43.

But the Clinton coat-tails could not bring enough Democrats home to the House and Senate. Voters seem to have chosen yet more of the Washington gridlock they have endured for 14 of the past 16 years. With one party running the White House and another controlling Congress, they act as brakes and watchdogs on one another.

The parties are locked into enforced co-operation in the centre, exactly where that dismayingly small 49 per cent of eligible voters who took part in the quadrennial ritual of US democracy appear to want them. And that is right where Clinton has always wanted to be, hauling his party to the right to join him, plumb in the electable mainstream.

Just as it took President Eisenhower in the 1950s to reconcile the Republicans to Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, so it took President Clinton to reconcile the Democrats to Reaganism and to the dismantling of big federal government, which was the legacy of the New Deal.

In effect, the election was a success for the strategy of "triangulation" conceived by Clinton's political adviser, the ill-fated Dick Morris. Clinton ran as the third point in a triangle, against both the Republican majority in Congress, and also to a less strident extent against the liberal and welfare state traditions of his own congressional Democrats.

Clinton's best ally in the election was the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, Alan Greenspan, who persuaded the newly-elected president four years ago to drop his Keynesian plans to stimulate the economy and pursue fiscal orthodoxy by cutting the budget deficit. The reward came in falling interest rates and a prolonged economic recovery. Greenspan kept interest rates down this year and let the good times roll all the way to election day.

As a result, Clinton was always going to be a difficult incumbent to shift. He presided over peace and prosperity, the first time a presidential election has been held in such conditions since 1928. Confident of the answer, he could even ask the question with which Ronald Reagan won the 1980 campaign, "Are you better off today than four years ago?"

But Clinton was given crucial help by the Republicans, who alarmed many centrist voters by the ideological heat of their anti-government rhetoric in Congress, and then mutilated themselves in the primaries. The long freeze as Republicans waited for retired general Colin Powell to decide whether to run got their campaign off to a late start. Once it began, the $30 million of ruthless television advertisements by publishing multi-millionaire Steve Forbes battered Dole badly, particularly in Arizona, where Forbes beat him in the primary.

If that were not enough, the spirited campaign of the rightwing firebrand Pat Buchanan left Republicans divided. And the Christian Coalition forced Dole to adopt a party platform stripped of the usual conscience clause, allowing a candidate to claim to be a good Republican while supporting abortion rights.

Each party is now in a state of incipient civil war, and it will be interesting to watch the initial skirmishes. In the Reagan years, the Republicans, whose conservatism was based on social and cultural prejudices, were kept in bed with the economic conservatives by a shared anti-communism. But the cold war is over, and that glue has lost its cohesive force.

"We are going to have to take on the religious nuts," Margaret Tutweiler vowed. A Southerner and moderate, she went from being James Baker's aide at the State Department to become a key player in the Dole campaign. She was dismayed at the way the strident Christian Coalition helped widen the gender gap, which had women preferring Clinton over Dole by a margin of 16 points.

By contrast, Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition boasts that only the dedication of his activists and their Get Out The Vote effort "saved Bob Dole from a meltdown". They clearly made the difference for Dole in Georgia and Colorado.

The Democrats are threatened with another form of division. To perpetuate the centrist ideology Clinton seeks to impose on the Democrats, he needs to ensure Gore's succession in four years' time. This will not be as easy as it sounds, even though Gore is the heir apparent. Sources close to the Daley brothers of Chicago, who will be powerful kingmakers, say that Gore, the Democratic leader in the House, Congressman Dick Gephardt, and former Senator Bill Bradley have already made their courtesy calls on the mayoral office in Chicago city hall.

Clinton's greatest character test is yet to come. Is he a man of sufficient honour to do as much for Gore's election in 2000 as his vice-president has done for his presidency? "Incomparable" was the word used by former New York governor Mario Cuomo to describe Gore's tenure of the job once described by former Vice-President James Nance Garner as "not worth a bucketful of warm spit".

"Al Gore has clearly taken the vice-presidency to a new level," says Professor Michael Nelson of Rhodes College, the leading historian of the Veeps. "It is clear to me that no other V-P in history has enjoyed the same level of responsibility and good personal relations with the president."

Gore has been given an unprecedented range of duties by Clinton from environmental issues and policy on high technology to reforming the bureaucracy. He launched a new kind of personal diplomacy with his joint commission with the Russian prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, for regular meetings that bring them together with cabinet ministers on bilateral issues from trade to environmental protection and arms control. Gore has since established similar commissions with Egypt and South Africa, and is currently working on developing one with China.

Gore loyalists are all over the Clinton administration. White House counsel Jack Quinn was Gore's chief of staff. The Clinton-Gore campaign manager, Peter Knight, was Gore's chief aide in the Senate. Clinton's domestic policy chief, Bruce Reed, used to write Gore's speeches.

Gore has learned to control any public show of his grand ambition, insisting that he is "focused like a laser beam on helping my president's re-election". But the smiles on the faces of his staff widened as the chants at campaign rallies went from "Four More Years" to "Twelve More Years" and to "Four More — then Gore".

Indeed, as Gore addressed the welcome-home committee of administration staffers at the White House on the day after the election, the "Twelve More Years" chant began. Gore tried to suppress it, waving them down with his hands in a reasonably genuine gesture of self-deprecation. But from behind his shoulder, Clinton egged them on.

IT IS A PROSPECT that dismays Democrats on the left, who fear a Gore succession would set in stone Clinton's plan to haul the party into the electable centre, to shift the Democrats from their urban and New Deal roots into the dominant political demography of the middle-class suburbs.

"We have the greatest inequality since the 1920s. We have still declining wages. There is nothing in the Clinton-Gore agenda that would suggest wages won't continue to decline for more and more Americans," Bob Borosage, an adviser to Jesse Jackson and head of the leftist Democratic group Committee for America's Future, told the Guardian. "The election for 2000 will begin the day after this election. You'll have Dick Gephardt in Congress and Al Gore waiting in the White House wings vying over who takes credit for what — and I think you will see a populist anger in the country which has been growing and will continue to grow."

The Democratic left cannot be written off. The trade union confederation, the AFL-CIO, is a serious force, having deployed $35 million into 65 carefully picked marginal congressional seats. They are owed favours, and they want their fears addressed on the relentless Clinton-Gore free trade agenda, which intensifies the low-wage competition on their members.

Gore has been making overtures to the unions and the left. "This two-headed monster of Dole-Gingrich has launched an all-out assault on decades of progress on behalf of working men and women," he told a union convention last month.

A kind of three-party system looms, with Clinton, Gore, and Republican and Democratic moderates in what the president calls "the vital centre". Much guff has been voiced by Clinton and Newt Gingrich, the Republican Speaker, about the voters sending a message that they want the parties to work together. This may be so, but the polarisation of traditional Democrats and Republicans on the radical right is under way, whatever voters may have intended through the ballot box.

Comment, page 14
Washington Post, page 19

The results

Clinton Democrats' presidential incumbent wins 31 states plus District of Columbia. Takes 49.2 per cent of popular vote (45.3 million ballots).

Dole Republican candidate wins 19 states. Takes 40.8 per cent of popular vote (37.6 million ballots).

★ 99 per cent of precincts counted.
Reform Party candidate Ross Perot takes 7.9 per cent of vote.

Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, New York, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Is., Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Alaska, Hawaii

Alaska, Hawaii not to scale

★ States changing allegiance in presidential election

How it looked in 1992

Key: Clinton / Bush

US Congress

Senate
100 seats, of which 34 up for election

	1994	1996
Rep	53	55*
		(21 won + 34 already held)
Dem	47	45*
		(13 won + 32 already held)

House of Representatives
435 members, all up for election. Majority = 218

	1994	1996
Rep	236	221
Dem	197	[illegible]
Independent	[illegible]	[illegible]
Vacant	[illegible]	[illegible]
Undecided	[illegible]	[illegible]

Pakistan pays for Bhutto's glitter

Suzanne Goldenberg
in Islamabad reports on the downfall of a dynasty

IN PAKISTAN'S Year Zero, even the new prime minister flies economy class, scorning the luxuries of office that have impoverished the country and last week deprived Benazir Bhutto of a job that she seemed to regard as a birthright.

Gone are the days when Ms Bhutto had a prime ministerial fleet of 85 black Mercedes, and her Cabinet colleagues were handed government jobs like party favours.

That is, if the caretaker government can keep its promise to turn around the country — which Berlin-based Transparency International called the second-most corrupt in the world — in 90 days.

Ms Bhutto was sacked by President Farooq Leghari and accused of sanctioning police death squads against an uprising by the Mojahir community in Karachi, of tampering with the course of justice by stacking the benches with her own appointees, of plundering the state coffers, and of presiding over an administration of astonishing incompetence. On Monday the interim government was said to be close to filing charges against her and her husband, investment minister Asif Ali Zardari.



Benazir Bhutto: defiant

Elections have been promised for February 3. With Pakistan's most charismatic leader out of the way for now, new entrants are emerging. The post has little job security — Ms Bhutto's government was the fourth to be dismissed since 1988 — but veteran cricketer Imran Khan is not deterred.

"If a government is truly popular, it does not have to worry about being sacked," Imran Khan said, first to the crease with his six-month-old Tehriq-e-Insaaf, or Justice Party, in the elections. "You don't need politicians," he said before leaving for London where his wife, Jemima, is due to give birth to their first child. "It's the biggest myth going. What have politicians ever done?"

If the caretaker administration is to be believed, they've had a nice time at other people's expense. Taking its lead from Imran Khan, the first to rail against political privileges, the administration has introduced an austerity package that will probably come as a shock to its members. It claims that this is the first step of a complete overhaul of Pakistani public life. An accountability commission that will investigate Ms Bhutto and other politicians for corruption is expected to be set up by the end of the month.

In Pakistan's VIP culture, an amazing number of perks accompanied high public office: lavish houses, fleets of cars, first-class air travel, free medical care abroad, and coteries of secretaries, bodyguards, drivers and servants. Taking their cue from the prime minister and her husband, the political class created a cosy club of comfort in a country where infant mortality rates and literacy levels are worse than in sub-Saharan Africa.

But while the élite made merry, the country suffered. Only days into the "turnaround" period of the economy, the caretaker administration is discovering that Pakistan's crisis is as deep as its coffers are empty.

About 200,000 people were put on the payrolls of government and state corporations — largely the beneficiaries of political patronage. Last month alone, the government had to borrow 60 billion rupees (about $1.5 billion) just to keep afloat. Nearly a quarter of that went to the military, the real power behind last week's changes.

In the prime ministerial mansion, meanwhile, Ms Bhutto is unrepentant. "Only the people can elect me, only the people can remove me. Whether I am good, bad or ugly, it's nobody's business," she said.

At times near tears, at times defiant, the ousted prime minister was giving another star performance in a role she has been perfecting for half a lifetime: a woman fighting for justice and democracy in the Muslim world. But it plays better to Western audiences than it does at home.

Ms Bhutto spent 36 hours as the prisoner on the hill before restrictions were lifted and she was able to meet the press. She promised to raise a legal challenge against her dismissal and to tour the country rallying support. But it is already becoming clear that the populist tide is ebbing away from Ms Bhutto. Imran Khan, though a political novice, anticipated middle-class revulsion at government corruption when he launched his party.

Liberal commentators are now expressing concern about the stability of a political system that negotiates change by turfing out elected governments, but they are clearly stating a minority view.

"People have to serve the government rather than serve themselves," says Shahid Javed Burki, who arrived in Pakistan last week as the new finance minister. "If leaders are not working, then the leaders have to be dispensed with."

He has taken a three-month leave of absence from his job as a vice-president of the World Bank to concentrate on Pakistan's economy.

If the overhaul of society is to be complete, the caretaker administration must find ways of making sure that the old order does not return with the next elections. And that includes the leader of the opposition Pakistan Muslim League, Nawaz Sharif, as well as Ms Bhutto.

For the moment the caretakers are working to disable Ms Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party, stirring up old resentments against her in an attempt to engineer a party split.

President Leghari recruited one member from her party into the cabinet — after being rejected by at least three others. He appointed Ms Bhutto's estranged uncle, Mumtaz, to the position of chief minister of the southern Sind province, which she had regarded as her fiefdom.

It is the way Ms Bhutto has handled ethnic unrest in her home town of Karachi that may prove her undoing. More than 2,000 people were killed there last year, human rights activists claim, hundreds murdered by police. On September 20, Ms Bhutto's estranged brother, Murtaza, became another victim. Her husband may be charged in connection with the killing.



A Pakistani shopkeeper does a celebratory dance after Ms Bhutto's sacking PHOTO: DYLAN MARTINEZ

As the Taliban regime tightens its grip on Afghanistan, **Jonathan Steele** describes the cruel punishment meted out to those who break strict Islamic laws

Casting stones in the name of Allah

IT BEGAN as a tawdry affair. It ended with her waist-deep in a pit and him bound hand and foot about two yards away, while a crowd of strangers hurled stones until both were bruised, blood-stained and dead.

What turned a common case of adultery into a cruel tragedy was the arrival of the ultra-fundamentalist Islamic movement called the Taliban, which imposed its harshest punishment on Turiolay, a motorcycle salesman, and Nurbibi, a housewife and mother.

Tracking down the site of the couple's death was easy enough. Mullah Mohammad Hassan, governor of Kandahar, named the ground beside the Id Gah mosque as the place where the stoning took place in August, the third since the Taliban took power two years ago.

The appearance of foreigners soon attracted a crowd. They willingly pointed to the pile of stones which still lay where Turiolay had died and the slight indentation in the ground where Nurbibi's pit was dug. "He wasn't blindfolded. His hands were tied behind his back," recalled Rahmatullah, aged 26, who witnessed the execution. "A mullah pronounced some words which we couldn't hear. Then the Taliban threw the first stones. After that ordinary people joined in."

A crowd of several thousand stood in the blazing sun to watch the grim scene. Mohammad Karim proudly admitted to having thrown stones. With evident gusto he re-enacted the scene, picking a stone from the ground and hurling it down again with force. "We aimed below the face," he said, "but, no, I didn't feel sorry for them. I was happy to see Sharia law being implemented. We have to punish this sort of thing."

Witnesses said it took seven stones to finish the man off; his partner lasted longer. Members of her family were ordered to be there. After several stones had crushed her deep into the pit, her 17-year-old son was asked to come forward, lift her blood-stained veil, and check if she was dead. He cried as he obeyed the order, reporting that his mother was still alive.

At that point one of the Taliban finished off the judicial proceedings by lifting a boulder and dropping it on the woman's head.

Since no one seemed sure of the details of the crime, we resolved to find the couple's homes. In a poor area of central Kandahar, a small boy led us between mud-brick walls along a winding path beside an open sewer. The path opened up to a wide area of ruins, the results of carpet bombing by the Russians in 1986. On the edge of this wasteland was a wooden door.

An elderly woman came out, and was starting to answer questions when two members of the Taliban appeared, attracted by the chattering crowd of curious neighbours and children. They ordered her inside, and told us to leave. "Pick up stones," our interpreter heard one of the Taliban tell the crowd. It could have been unpleasant if we had not decided to counter-attack, warning the young Taliban that the governor of Kandahar had advised us of the case. He never gave the order for the crowd to fire their stones, though as we beat our retreat a few children let fly regardless. Fortunately, their aim was poor.



A Taliban fighter beats a man as he arrests him for possession of drugs in Kabul PHOTO: EMMANUEL DU[illegible]

The interpreter went back next morning, unaccompanied by foreigners. Dressed in typical Kandahari clothes, he was able to uncover the pathetic background to the execution. Turiolay was about 38 when he died. He spent his life selling motorcycles in a roadside market beside the stoning-ground. Nurbibi was his stepmother. His father married her around 15 years ago after his first wife died. He died a few years later himself and Nurbibi, a widow in her 20s, carried on living in the family home.

Turiolay's wife, Nazaneen, told the interpreter that she saw her husband and Nurbibi develop an intimate relationship, though it took time for her to realise it was physical. Like many who have been betrayed, she blamed the other woman. "Turiolay was not in love," she claimed, "but something inside them forced them together."

She insisted on speaking round a half-open door rather than coming into the street. She wore a red veil and a red sweater but kept her eyes uncovered.

A cousin described Turiolay as "a good Muslim who prayed in the mosque five times a day and observed the fasts. Unfortunately, Satan cheated him and made him resort to this relationship".

The affair lasted a number of years, and might have gone on longer if the Taliban had not come to power. By then the two sons Nurbibi had had by Turiolay's father were in their teens. Influenced by Taliban thinking, they resolved to denounce their mother.

Under Islamic law, four witnesses are needed to prove adultery. The boys suggested to the Taliban that they hide on a neighbour's roof. From this vantage point one summer night they watched Turiolay and Nurbibi on their own flat roof coupling under the stars. Caught in flagrante, the adulterous pair had no defence, and after a month in prison they were taken out to die.

Gulolai, the motorcycle salesman's 12-year-old daughter and the oldest of the eight children he had with Nazaneen, said she saw her father being stoned. "I was sitting on top of a lorry. All I did was cry," she said before bursting into tears again and running into the house.

How the wounded wife felt once Turiolay was dead was not entirely clear, though her laconic tone let two broad hints. She had stayed away from her husband's stoning, and she told the interpreter she could not give him a photo of her dead husband. "The only one I possess is a tiny one on an identity card he had during the mojahedin struggle against the Russians." She produced the photo briefly. "The children often look at it," she said softly.

The interpreter could not locate the boys who had denounced their mother.

Too late for my father – but not for his people

It is a year since Ken Saro-Wiwa was killed. His son **Ken Wiwa** reflects on events since

A YEAR ago, I drove myself to breakdown trying to draw the attention of politicians to a tragedy unfolding before the world's eyes. It was in vain. My father, Ken Saro-Wiwa, and eight other Ogoni environmentalists were, as John Major put it, "judicially murdered".

The Prime Minister was just one of the voices fast to condemn the execution but slow to intervene to prevent it. They, along with the Shell company, had pressed us to mind their "quiet diplomacy" when those who knew, like Wole Soyinka, were saying that only tough, direct action would impress the military junta.

In the days that followed I had many messages of condolence from Commonwealth and European leaders. I was even received by the secretary general of the United Nations. Many promises were made. My father's death would not be in vain. Serious questions would be asked of Shell's role in the Ogoni saga. Resolutions were passed by parliaments around the world, including the UN General Assembly. Many fine words, but little action, followed.

Today, our families are still in mourning. But our thoughts are also with the 19 Ogoni men still held in a Port Harcourt prison from where they saw my father's execution. Their crime is the same as his — standing up for the social and environmental justice that in Britain we take for granted. It is too late for my father. But not for them or for the people of Ogoni.

Meanwhile, in Ogoni, the military road-blocks are again in place. The people are still subject to arbitrary justice by a regime which has declared itself judge and jury and proved itself no respecter of the international community, public opinion, the laws and moral imperatives of economics and common decency.

In the face of worldwide pressure, the Nigerian dictatorship pleads for time, citing its timetable for a return to democracy. So much for the pious promises of a year ago. Time will tell whether the General is sincere, whether the measures that Shell claimed to have put in place will be maintained.

For us, our requests are simple. As a son, I would like my father's body returned for burial. The dictators still deny us that. As an Ogoni, I would like my people and our land treated by Shell with the same respect as they afford communities in Britain. As a democrat, I would like Nigeria freed from military dictatorship. As a citizen, I would like democratic politicians to recognise that they must hold accountable people who perpetrate crimes such as the murder of my father.

In the next year, I hope the silent elements within Shell who prefer constructive engagement rather than sly cussedness will examine their consciences and stand up. It is not enough, as my father pointed out, "to hide under the claim that they are only doing their duty".

Some, like Shell's former environmentalist Bopp van Dessel who resigned in protest at the company's record in the Delta, have shown great courage. There are many others who have misgivings, but whose apprehensions are for the general good. It is shameful that Shell preaches against "emotive reaction".

Thus far it has chosen to carry on as usual and hire expensive image-launderers to wipe the stain of blood from its conscience. The fact that Shell and the Nigerian government have spent millions only fills me with contempt. But as my father said: "I and my colleagues are not the only ones on trial. Shell is here on trial . . . the company has ducked this particular trial, but its day will surely come . . . the ecological war that the company has waged in Delta will be called into question and the crimes of that war will be punished. The crime of the company's dirty wars against the Ogoni people will also be punished."

The debate moved into a new sphere with my father's death, but Shell and the Nigerian authorities remain two steps behind. It is only a matter of time before their crimes catch up with them. How many Shell executives would be prepared to walk the gallows to defend their beliefs? This past year has, for me, been one of recovery. The future offers the tantalising prospect of reconciliation. I have always tried to maintain an equilibrium and dignity in the face of great insensitivity, provocation and even hostility.

I have my father's legacy to uphold and his example to follow.

Shell bows to pressure

Simon Beavis and Paul Brown

SHELL, the Anglo-Dutch oil giant, tried to quash 18 months of international vilification for its role in Nigeria and its environmental record by announcing it is to include a specific reference to human rights in its general statement of business principles.

The move came two days before the first anniversary of the killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa, the Ogoni leader who was executed by the Nigerian regime for his protests over Shell's exploitation of his homeland.

The company endured worldwide condemnation for its failure to intervene on behalf of the nine Ogoni leaders killed, and has remained under pressure since. Its stance of non-interference had been widely interpreted as support for the Nigerian regime.

A spokesman for the company said Shell is currently reviewing its business principles statement and "looking positively" at including a clear reference to human rights. The group had publicly supported the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and now wanted to see if that could be explicitly reflected in the business principles statement.

Labour takes tough line on Europe

Larry Elliott

THE shadow chancellor, Gordon Brown, sought to toughen Labour's stance on Europe — and weaken its commitment to the Social Chapter — with a promise to veto any attempts to force Britain to adopt common social security policies or give workers the right to a seat on company boards.

In a clear attempt to defuse Tory attacks claiming Labour is soft on Brussels, Mr Brown told the Confederation of British Industry conference in Harrogate on Monday that Labour shares the concerns of business about these two key elements of the Social Chapter.

Mr Brown argued that Labour's transformation into an unashamedly pro-business party means that it will look at European social legislation on a case-by-case basis.

Government ministers have been keeping up a non-stop barrage over Labour's support for the Social Chapter, and Mr Brown's speech — coming after the cooler line on the single currency taken by the shadow foreign secretary, Robin Cook — is a sign of the Opposition's determination to neutralise Europe as an election issue.

Mr Brown stressed that Labour has no intention of importing any European legislation that would threaten jobs. He hoped to reassure the Confederation of British Industry that Labour's policy of signing up to the Social Chapter falls well short of a blanket commitment and is not a way of introducing Europe's high social costs "by the back door". He said: "We must never return to the situation in Britain where . . . one party is seen as pro-business and the other as anti-business."

Labour is keen to counter Tory claims that it would agree to an extension of qualified majority voting (QMV), thereby leaving Britain with no alternative but to accept continental-style social laws.

Mr Brown said: "We will sign the Social Chapter, a position that the British people have consistently supported, but we will not allow QMV to be extended to areas where it should not be."

At the moment, there are two sections to the Social Chapter: one governed by QMV, the other requiring unanimity. Mr Brown said Labour has no intention of allowing social security and co-determination in the boardroom to be moved into the section where Britain could be outvoted by other member states.

Labour's tough talking won the support of business, which believes it can live with the directives on works councils and parental leave.

Sir Colin Marshall, CBI president, said that business wanted to see social policy reformed so that it was about "employability of the unemployed" and not about "making conditions better for those in work".

● Labour's hopes of victory in the forthcoming Wirral South byelection suffered a setback at the weekend, with the sudden resignation of its parliamentary candidate, Ian Wingfield, over allegations of domestic violence.

Dr Wingfield said he was stepping down because he feared that "untrue rumours" about him could damage Labour's chances of winning the Tory seat, made vacant by the death of Barry Porter.

The Mail on Sunday carried an interview with a former girlfriend, Carolyn Simpson, who alleges Dr Wingfield was violent both towards her and subsequently to Bronwyn McKenna, his former wife.

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Patten lays out personal manifesto

Richard Thomas

CHRIS PATTEN, former chairman of the Conservative Party, on Monday sketched out his own manifesto for a re-entry to British politics, based on a renewed push for free trade, European cohesion and deep cuts in welfare spending.

Hinting at ambitions to lead the Tory party, Mr Patten bolstered his credentials with the right by insisting that only lower state spending and taxes could allow the UK to compete with the tiger economies of the Far East — before reiterating his strongly pro-European views.

The current governor of Hong Kong said he was maintaining "compulsory radio silence" in his diplomatic role and denied that his recent appearance on BBC Radio 4's Desert Island Discs was part of a charm offensive in advance of his return to the UK next year. But he did little to dampen speculation about his future intentions.

Asked if he would be interested in the leadership of the Conservative Party — if the job were available and he were an MP — Mr Patten said: "This is completely a hypothetical question. But if you were to ask me whether, if my backhand was better and if I got more of my first serves in, would I want to play at Wimbledon, my answer would be yes."

Speaking at the Confederation of British Industry annual conference in Harrogate, he condemned "billionaire protectionists" such as Sir James Goldsmith for acting against the interests of Western firms and consumers. "It is protectionism, not free trade, which leads to beggar-my-neighbour economics," he said.

Instead of attempting to block imports from Asia, Mr Patten said the UK needed to emulate the entrepreneurial spirit, lean government machines and commitment to education in the East. But he denied a wholesale conversion to "slash and burn" economics. "I am not calling for a return to workhouse welfare."

But Mr Patten said that 20 years of structural reforms to the domestic economy had improved Britain's standing on the world stage, with Asian investors and exporters seeing the UK as a bridge to Europe.

He warned that an increasingly Eurosceptic tinge to politics could be damaging. Investors were attracted by the UK's open economy and participation in the European Union.

Cabinet battle on pensions

THE Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, and Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, are engaged in a furious behind-the-scenes battle over the threat said to be posed to Britain's £500 billion pension funds by the European Union's single currency plans, *writes Michael White*.

The row spilled on to the floor of the Commons last week after Mr Clarke slapped down claims by the all-party social security select committee, chaired by Labour's Frank Field, that British taxpayers could become liable to help finance pay-as-you-go pensions in other EU states if it joined the single currency.

By arranging a parliamentary answer this week, Mr Clarke was said by his critics, mostly Eurosceptic MPs on both sides, to have deliberately pre-empted Mr Lilley, whose department would normally be expected to answer the select committee's report. Tories on the committee say Mr Lilley privately agrees with them.

It emerged later that Mr Field, MP for Birkenhead, had tabled his own question to the Chancellor, asking "when and in what form" he plans to answer the report formally. The aim is to flush out Mr Clarke, forcing him to say it is Mr Lilley's task, not his. Tory MPs have also tabled hostile questions.

According to the committee, Europe is not doing enough to reform its pension structures as its population ages, and does not count the pension debt that is piling up when it calculates its obligations to stay solvent under the Maastricht Treaty.

That has been rejected as absurd by ministers and the European Commission, a line echoed in Mr Clarke's Commons answer to Tory loyalist Matthew Banks, MP for Southport. Under the Maastricht Treaty "a member state cannot be liable for another member state's commitments in any area of spending", the Chancellor said.

He also highlighted the EU's planned stability pact, which will stop member states "following irresponsible fiscal policies which could destabilise the markets" through excess borrowing. Pensions are not the only liability states have, and should not be treated in isolation, Mr Clarke declared.

In theory, that response takes care of Mr Field's fear that, even if Britons do not end up with an added tax burden, they may face higher than necessary interest rates inside a single currency as other states struggle to pay for their pensioners.

● Nearly one household in six in Britain is living below the poverty line, putting the country on a par with some of the poorest states in the European Union, according to the Cohesion Report, published by the European Commission in Brussels last week.

It says Britain is investing less in its regions than other EU countries, that employment growth in old industrial regions such as South Yorkshire and the West Midlands is among the most sluggish in Europe, and that productivity is low.

HK minorities in last fight

Andrew Higgins

AS BRITAIN paused this week to remember its war dead, a tacit alliance of the Queen and the Hong Kong governor, Chris Patten, is challenging the Government's stance against granting British residence rights to the families of Gurkha troops who served in the Falklands and to other Hong Kong ethnic minority groups.

There has been widespread dismay in the colony, which reverts to China on July 1 next year, over London's refusal to admit the families of some 750 Gurkhas who are to join the 5th Airborne Brigade in Britain.

In an unusual intervention, the Queen has expressed sympathy for the plight of the estimated 3,000-5,000 people from Indian and other ethnic minorities in Hong Kong who will become, in effect, stateless after the handover. The letter from Buckingham Palace increases pressure on the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, to relax his stand.

Unlike the Gurkhas, who are nationals of Nepal, most Indians and other minorities resident in Hong Kong were born as full British citizens but later reclassified as "British nationals overseas", with no right to live in Britain.

Mr Patten, in London this week, is expected to press for better treatment for those affected by the passport restrictions. Similar demands are also likely to be aired in Parliament when MPs hold their last formal debate on the territory this week.

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Out with the knives, and in with the canes

THE MORALITY crusade among politicians gathered pace as attention turned to violence on the small screen, the carrying of knives in public, and the role of the cane in schools.

The Home Secretary, Michael Howard, who announces a "crackdown" on something or other almost every week, demanded a report from the British Board of Film Classification on how it proposed to reduce the level of violence portrayed on videos. His move, he said, had been influenced by the "considerable public concern" shown in response to an appeal for moral regeneration launched by Frances Lawrence, whose headmaster husband was knifed to death by a teenager. Her manifesto referred specifically to violence in the media.

The Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, took up the cry and complained that television concentrated unduly on "the darker and violent side of society". She is to ask the BBC, the Independent Television Commission and the Broadcasting Standards Council what they intend to do about it.

Mr Howard also said he would give the police wider powers to stop and search, for knives or drugs, anyone suspected of being a member of a street gang. And he agreed, in cross-party talks with Labour and the Liberal Democrats, to consider laws to control the sale and marketing of combat knives.

The police already have extensive "stop-and-search" powers, which they used last year on 39,000 people suspected of carrying offensive weapons. Under the new rules they will no longer need a reason to believe that a specific individual is carrying a knife before they can search him. Many libertarian organisations are already critical of the so-called "sus laws", which they claim give police the excuse to stop anyone they do not like the look of.

In an attempt to avoid a backbench rebellion, the Prime Minister will allow a free vote in the Commons on whether to restore caning in schools. Only about 30 Tory MPs have so far put their names to an amendment to the Education Bill, which is likely to be voted on next month and is almost certain to fail.

HEREDITARY PEERS are likely to keep their voting rights in the House of Lords for a while longer if the Labour party wins the next election. The promise by the party leader, Tony Blair, of a quick, two-clause bill to break aristocratic power in Parliament is thought to have been put "on the back burner".

A Labour government would give priority to a referendum process, leading to devolved assemblies for Scotland and Wales within a year. But party strategists fear that the maverick band of 770 hereditary peers would subvert the devolution legislation if their rights were also threatened. So reform of the second chamber will have to wait.

AN EXTRA £1.3 billion was promised to the National Health Service next year on top of the £33.8 billion currently being spent. The bulk of the money will go to hospitals, which are cutting back on services because of cash shortages and warning of serious consequences for patients if there is a harsh winter.

Family doctors, who did well in last year's spending round, are complaining that they are being required to perform "non-core" tasks previously done by hospital doctors. Their union, the British Medical Association, told them to refuse to do such work — such as tending elderly patients in care homes — unless they are paid extra.

CHILD-CARE agencies were horrified by an investigatory report which showed that hundreds of young people have run away and disappeared while in the care of local authorities. The case files of one in six of those missing had also been lost.

The investigation was commissioned by Gloucestershire County Council following the murder case involving Fred and Rosemary West, in and around whose house the police found the bodies of nine girls and young women. Three others were found at other sites. At least one had sought refuge with the Wests after running away from care. Another runaway was assaulted by the Wests, but survived.

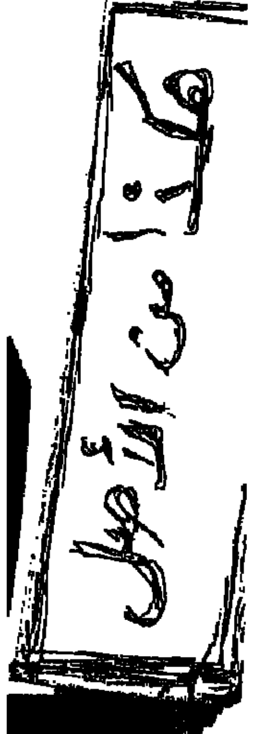
The inquiry, which found that Gloucestershire social services could not trace 100 young people who had been in its care between 1970 and 1944, urged the establishment of a national database of missing people.

OXFORD University dons have decided that a patch of grass on a city-centre sports field mattered more to their academic honour than a £20 million donation for a new international business school.

They threw out proposals to build a world-class business school on land acquired 30 years ago on condition that it would remain undeveloped in perpetuity. In effect, they were rejecting a £20 million benefaction from Wafic Said, a Syrian-born financier who helped Britain win a huge contract to supply defence equipment to Saudi Arabia.

The university authorities will now put the matter to a postal ballot of 3,200 dons. Mr Said has given them until February 1 to agree on an acceptable site, after which he will withdraw his offer.







Back to white . . . Nearly 90 swans were returned to the Thames at Hampton at the weekend after being cleaned at the Swan Sanctuary in Egham, Surrey, following a boatyard oil spill PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY WEASER

Wakeham and MPs in media row

Andrew Culf

LORD Wakeham, chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, clashed with MPs last week. During ill-tempered exchanges, in which he denied that the commission was just a public relations façade, Lord Wakeham accused Gerald Kaufman, Labour chairman of the National Heritage committee, of being the most "offensive maker of remarks" at Westminster.

The committee's inquiry into newspaper payments to witnesses in court cases widened into a discussion of the effectiveness of press self-regulation.

Lord Wakeham, a former Tory chief whip, repeatedly complained that MPs were straying from the point as they accused the commission of being toothless, with inadequate sanctions. At one point after Lord Wakeham conceded that the commission was voluntary, Mr Kaufman said: "You are telling us your body is completely useless, but statutory regulation is unattractive."

Lord Wakeham replied: "I would strongly urge the Government not to bring in statutory controls on the press, which we have not had since the days of Magna Carta."

Mr Kaufman intervened again, saying Lord Wakeham "sounds like a eunuch trying to do the best in the circumstances".

Lord Wakeham said: "I cannot think of a more offensive maker of remarks than you — but even you are not as good as you used to be. I know the chairman of the committee is a sensible, reasonable person, but he is doing his best to disguise it today."

Although Mr Kaufman said he was suitably chastened, Lord Wakeham said it did not look like it.

Last month the Lord Chancellor published a consultation document recommending that payments to witnesses should become a criminal offence, or a contempt of court.

The issue arose after 19 witnesses in the Rosemary West murder trial signed contracts with the media.

Travel firms face inquiry

Pauline Springett

BRITAIN'S travel industry, facing allegations that anti-competitive practices are giving holidaymakers a raw deal, is to be investigated by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission (MMC).

The Office of Fair Trading's director-general, John Bridgeman, has asked the commission to investigate the ownership links between the larger tour operators and travel agency chains. The investigation will also look into the "widespread" practice of selling holidays with a discount — provided specific travel insurance is purchased.

Mr Bridgeman said the big tour companies that also own travel agencies supplied a large proportion of Britain's £7 billion-a-year market for foreign package holidays. He believed they had the power to put smaller rivals at a disadvantage by removing their brochures from display, or threatening to do so to gain larger commissions.

"The two leading travel companies with whom I have had discussions argue that such practices are a reflection of the competition prevailing in the travel trade. My view is that they distort competition," he said.

The decision caught the big operators by surprise. After the OFT said in July that it wanted an MMC inquiry, the two biggest operators, Thomson and Airtours, tried to negotiate, but the talks came to nothing.

Mr Bridgeman said he had sought certain undertakings. "It has become clear after weeks of discussions with Thomson and Airtours that this is not going to be possible."

Allegations of unfair trading have haunted the industry for years. Consumer groups and smaller tour operators claim the public is generally unaware that the big operators often own travel agencies. The critics argue that the agencies excessively promote the holidays offered by the parent company, and restrict access to holidays offered by rivals.

Thomson, Britain's biggest tour operator, with about 28.5 per cent of the market, owns Lunn Poly, which has 800 shops. Airtours, which has a 20 per cent market share, owns Going Places, and tour group Inspirations has commercial links with the travel agents A T Mays.

● Thousands of British Airways travellers flying to and from Terminal Four at London's Heathrow airport have been enduring delays of up to two days before being reunited with their bags.

A failure in the luggage handling system and a work-to-rule by 30 of BA ground staff led to a backlog of 3,500 bags last week. It had reportedly been as high as 11,000.

Nepalese heir must leave

Kamal Ahmed

THE NEPALESE man adopted by a British millionaire after a pact made in the Himalayas has lost his fight to stay in Britain.

Jay Khadka, aged 20, applied to the High Court in a last-ditch effort to overturn a Home Office decision to deport him. Mr Justice Laws rejected Mr Khadka's case, saying the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, had acted as "a reasonable decision-maker" in turning down Mr Khadka's plea for exceptional leave to remain in the country.

"Many may regard the result arrived at as harsh," Mr Justice Laws said. "But the [immigration] policy is a coherent one and its application is on reflection perfectly understandable. [The Home Secretary's] decision was taken as the people's democratic representative; if I overturned it, I would usurp that role, which it is no business of mine to do."

Home Office documents lodged with the court said that allowing Mr Khadka to stay would undermine government policy, despite a recommendation by the Immigration Appeals Tribunal that returning him to Nepal would be "traumatic".

Family first, page 31

Plan to imprison foreign dissidents

Ewen MacAskill

THE Home Office is preparing legislation that could lead to the imprisonment of foreign dissidents using London as a base for plotting the overthrow of their home governments, such as Saudi dissident Mohammed al-Masari.

The Home Secretary, Michael Howard, is still smarting from his failure to deport Mr al-Masari, who has been an embarrassment to the British government in its trade dealings with Saudi Arabia. Although linked to fundamentalist groups, Mr al-Masari denies he advocates the violent overthrow of the Saudi regime.

The bill would outlaw conspiracy or incitement to "substantive acts" abroad. Anyone inciting violence in Britain is liable to prosecution, but the law does not extend to incitement overseas. The bill could end a tradition of providing a safe haven for revolutionaries dating back into the last century.

Mr Howard was blocked by the courts in his attempt to have Mr al-Masari moved to one of the remoter Caribbean islands, Dominica. One argument against his deportation was that Dominica was inappropriate because it had no place for Muslim worship. A stronger one was that Mr Howard was caving in to pressure from the Saudi government.

The counter-argument from Conservative backbenchers was that it was wrong that dissidents should be allowed to upset British trade.

In the end, the High Court ruled that Mr Howard had circumvented the UN Convention on Refugees for "diplomatic and trade reasons".

The dissidents bill is one of more than half a dozen the Home Office has prepared in the hope that they will be taken up as private members' bills. Home Office sources said another of the bills would ensure that thousands of prisoners convicted of sex or other violent crimes will have DNA tests before leaving prison. At present anyone convicted before the introduction of the 1994 Criminal Justice Act would not face compulsory DNA testing. If the bill became law by next April, 6,000 more prisoners would be tested before release.

Private members' bills are difficult to get through if they lack cross-party support. The Opposition is unlikely to block DNA testing. The move against dissidents could be harder. Labour back-benchers such as George Galloway were prominent in the campaign to prevent the deportation of Mr al-Masari.

The bills are part of Mr Howard's battle with Labour to show which of the two parties is tougher on law and order. Other bills in the pipeline include: increasing police and court powers to deal with under-age drinking and with clubs where there is evidence of drugs; and allowing the police to keep or give to charity property that has been lost or seized and cannot be returned to the owners.

● The new Lord Chief Justice has said he will join the fight against key parts of Mr Howard's law and order legislation.

Lord Bingham's attack on the Crime (Sentencing) Bill and its introduction of US-style minimum mandatory sentences follows similar criticism from three former Tory cabinet ministers, Douglas Hurd, Kenneth Baker and Peter Brooke.

But Lord Bingham said he would not play an active role in the campaign in Parliament to force the Government to drop parts of the legislation. The minimum the judges wanted was to be able to set aside a mandatory sentence if they believed it would lead to injustice.

Fleet Street legend Marje Proops dies

Sue Quinn

MARJORIE PROOPS, Fleet Street's legendary personal advice columnist, died on Sunday.

Better known as "Dear Marje", she dispensed wisdom and encouragement and attacked taboos during a career that spanned a moral revolution and more than 44 years on her beloved Daily Mirror. She was believed to be 85 when she died in hospital from pneumonia.

Labour leader Tony Blair said: "She was a legend in journalism and will be sadly missed, not just by the Mirror and its readers, but by the country, who came to appreciate her warmth and generosity."

She was born over a greengrocer's shop in Woking and grew up over a pub in Hoxton where her father became landlord. Her mother worked hard to give her girls a middle-class upbringing, with a nanny, nice clothes and schools. It was at one of the latter that Marje, until then called Rebecca, was sneered at as Becky the Jewess, and started to use her second name. That sort of anti-Semitism informed her life in many ways, giving her a determination to fight for the underdog and a lively political awareness.

Her journalistic career began with the Daily Herald in 1945 as fashion editor, but by 1954 she was agony aunt on Woman's Mirror, where she asked readers to send stamped addressed envelopes for advice on matters deemed improper for publication. By the 1960s her column was openly advising young girls on contraception and abortion, and young men about their sexual inadequacies.

She once boasted that she was the first journalist in Britain to address masturbation. Her columns reflected the evolution of social mores, covering issues from battered wives to Aids. She was devoted to the Daily Mirror, which she refused to leave despite offers from rival newspapers, because it reflected her feelings about society.

She had a staff of eight to handle 50,000 letters a year. She logged every one as some correspondents leant on her for regular comfort.

But behind the trademark spectacles was a woman not at ease in her own life. An authorised biography in 1993 revealed a 20-year adulterous affair during a sexless marriage to Sidney Proops. She said the marriage made her appreciate the meaning of agony.



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
November 17 1996

Heseltine caught in code breach

Guardian Reporters

SIR Robin Butler, the head of the Civil Service, blocked an attempt by the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, to instruct civil servants to find government contractors willing to endorse the Conservative party during the general election. Mr Heseltine had wanted to assemble a squad of "cheerleaders" for government policy from quango chiefs and heads of firms awarded public contracts.

A circular sent to all government departments from Mr Heseltine's private office was withdrawn after Sir Robin warned that it was an "inappropriate" use of civil servants.

Mr Heseltine had proposed that each Whitehall department "should identify service providers who could be vigorous and attractive proponents of government policy".

The revelation has sparked angry claims from the Opposition that the Government is systematically breaking the civil service code of neutrality by attempting to dragoon civil servants into a propaganda battle.

Dated August 19, the memo asked for names to be submitted by September 24, but Sir Robin ordered ministries not to act on it. Mr Heseltine claimed that as soon as he became aware that false interpretation was being placed on it, he ordered the memo to be withdrawn.

But Liz Symons, head of the First Division Association, which represents senior civil servants, said: "We are very pleased that Sir Robin acted so promptly in safeguarding the political neutrality of the Civil Service. It is a direct indication of the sort of callousness some ministers have towards political neutrality."

The revelations about the letter came as Tessa Jowell, the shadow health spokeswoman, attacked "the amazing misuse of civil servants' time" in the preparation of a White Paper on the health service, due to be published this week by the Health Secretary, Stephen Dorrell.

The 40-page document repeatedly praises the Government's commitment to the NHS but contains no legislative proposals.

On Monday, Labour released a further leaked memo implicating Mr Heseltine. The memo, dated July 24, was written by Mr Heseltine. In it, he said a problem for the Government was that the media turned for information from "service deliverers" — headteachers, prison governors, doctors, magistrates, rail regulators — but many of them were opposed to government policy.

"As one way to redress the balance, we should set up panels of people associated with the public services who could be vigorous and attractive proponents of our policies."

Mr Heseltine insisted that the wording of the first leaked memo had been misinterpreted. He accused Labour of waging a dirty tricks campaign.

"Sir Robin pointed out to me that it was very important to make sure that this [the project] was not done by civil servants, and that it should be done by special advisers [who are political appointees]. The moment he did that, I agreed that that was the position."

Minister accused of lying to MPs

David Hencke

DAVID WILLETTS, the minister at the centre of a Commons inquiry into the handling of the cash-for-questions scandal, was accused on Monday by a fellow Tory of having lied either to his own whips or to the committee investigating a leaked memo about the affair.

Quentin Davies, Conservative MP for Stamford and Spalding, accused the Paymaster General of deceiving either his colleagues at the time he wrote a crucial memo about the affair in 1994, or Monday's televised inquiry.

Mr Willetts, then a government whip, was suspected of trying to stifle a parliamentary inquiry into the Neil Hamilton affair after the then trade minister was exposed by the Guardian as having taken money for parliamentary lobbying.

Mr Davies, during a heated exchange at the climax of a specially convened meeting of the Commons' standards and privileges committee, said: "Either you were deceiving your colleagues in the initial memorandum or you are trying to deceive the committee now in your subsequent memorandum. Which of these should we believe? Both of them cannot be true."

Monday's hearing was forced after the Willetts 1994 memo was made public following the collapse of the libel action brought against the Guardian by Mr Hamilton and the lobbyist, Ian Greer.

The hearing — coming five days after Lord Nolan, appointed to investigate standards in public life, warned Parliament to keep party politics out of the inquiry — is the first stage of a two-pronged investigation into the scandal.

It centres on the £28,000 payments in cash and shopping vouchers made to Mr Hamilton by Mohamed Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods. Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, will also investigate about 30 MPs who were either paid for introducing clients or received election expenses from Mr Greer.

The Willetts memo indicated that Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, then chairman of the committee investigating MPs' behaviour, wanted advice from the Government on how to deal with complaints about Mr Hamilton. Mr Willetts wrote that Sir Geoffrey could either claim *sub judice* and shelve the inquiry or investigate it as soon as possible "exploiting [the] good Tory majority" on the committee. Both approaches were apparently designed to smother parliamentary discussion of the Hamilton affair.

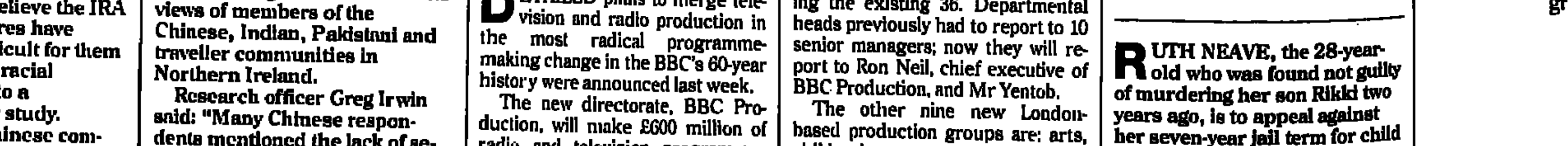


David Willetts being questioned by the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee on his wording of a memorandum

But before the inquiry, Mr Willetts, contradicting his 1994 memo to fellow whips, said in a statement that Sir Geoffrey had not sought advice on how to deal with the affair; that he had not offered any advice; and that there had been no attempt by him to manipulate the committee. He apologised if he had caused confusion through "inexperience".

Mr Willetts then told the inquiry that what he had meant by the phrase in the original memo "he wants our advice" was: "He is in want of advice. He needed advice."

Mr Davies, however, said those two versions of events were "180 degrees wide" of each other. "A reasonable man or woman if they had to choose between the two were more likely to choose the original memorandum."



Race tension rises in Ulster

David Sharrock

NORTHERN Ireland's ethnic communities believe the IRA and loyalist ceasefires have made life more difficult for them with an increase in racial attacks, according to a University of Ulster study.

Leaders of the Chinese community — the largest of four ethnic groups identified in the report — feel that bigots who thrived on sectarian violence turned their prejudices on minority groups.

While Protestants and Catholics felt safer during the 18 months of peace, the fears of the province's tiny ethnic community — estimated to total between 10,000 and 15,000 — have increased. The report adds that a substantial number of Chinese in particular felt the RUC did not protect them.

The report, by the Centre for Conflict Studies, was the result of a year-long examination of the views of members of the Chinese, Indian, Pakistani and traveller communities in Northern Ireland.

Research officer Greg Irwin said: "Many Chinese respondents mentioned the lack of security for their premises and the perception that the police failed to prevent crimes against them."

In the first half of this year there were 26 late-night attacks on Chinese businessmen at their homes, 11 of them with violence or the threat of violence.

In June, Simon Tang, a restaurant owner in Carrickfergus, Co Antrim, was beaten to death with baseball bats during a robbery. The Chinese community has offered a £2,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the culprits.

BBC merges production

Andrew Culf

DETAILED plans to merge television and radio production in the most radical programme-making change in the BBC's 60-year history were announced last week.

The new directorate, BBC Production, will make £600 million of radio and television programmes each year. The BBC said some of its 4,000 staff would lose their jobs in the shake-up. It plans to find savings of £30 million next year.

The creation of a single bi-media drama department — which will be responsible for output as diverse as Casualty, EastEnders and The Archers — will initially come under the command of Alan Yentob, the former controller of BBC1.

Mr Yentob, who became director of programmes in the summer, will take on the responsibility of creative head of BBC Drama until a permanent appointment in the new year.

The BBC said the directorate would have 18 departments, replacing the existing 36. Departmental heads previously had to report to 10 senior managers; now they will report to Ron Neil, chief executive of BBC Production, and Mr Yentob.

The other nine new London-based production groups are: arts, children's programmes, documentaries and history, drama, education, entertainment, events, sport and topical features.

● Ministers are facing renewed pressure from senior Conservative backbenchers to help avert the BBC World Service's funding crisis.

MPs on the foreign affairs select committee, which meets this week, appeared sympathetic to reinstating some of last year's cuts. The service is facing a £5 million shortfall. The Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind — now in pre-Budget talks with the Treasury — is trying to find money to cover the shortfall.

In Brief

GEORGE Stephanopoulos, the whiz-kid White House adviser who helped Bill Clinton win two presidential victories, is set to work for Tony Blair and Labour at the general election.

THE Government unveiled a £100 million nationwide plan to conscript 100,000 long-term dole claimants into compulsory work experience schemes in an acceleration towards US-style workfare.

STEVEN NORRIS, the former London transport minister who steered through the privatisation of London bus companies, is to join the board of Capital City Bus.

FEWER and fewer men accused of rape in Britain are being found guilty, although more women are reporting the crime. Less than one in 10 reports of rape result in a conviction, according to a University of North London study.

A PSYCHOLOGY lecturer whose extreme views on race have led to a boycott of his lectures has been suspended by Edinburgh university after claiming in an Internet newsletter that paedophile sex is harmless.

THE deadlock which has closed Manton school for more than a week ended when the "battle-weary" mother of an allegedly unteachable 10-year-old backed down and agreed to send him to another school.

SZYMON Serafinowicz, the 85-year-old retired carpenter being prosecuted in Britain's first war crimes trial, may go before an Old Bailey jury next year to decide if he is fit to plead.

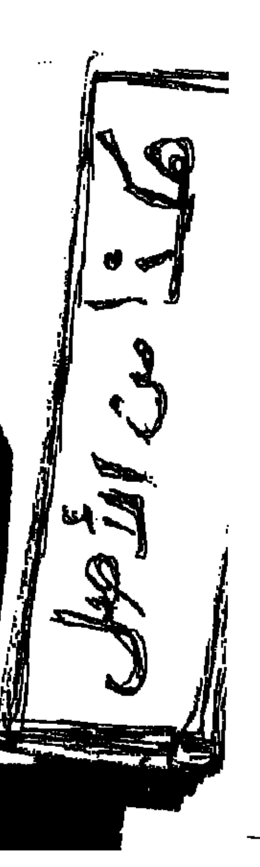
TWO Britons, James Miles, aged 18, and Paul Loseby, aged 20, have been charged with attempting to smuggle 10kg of cocaine out of Venezuela.

THE Government is to put an official value on housework and other unpaid labour 25 years after the "wages for housework" campaign started.

RUTH NEAVE, the 28-year-old who was found not guilty of murdering her son Rikki two years ago, is to appeal against her seven-year jail term for child cruelty and burglary.

A DANGEROUS criminal, Christopher Ward, is back behind bars after hijacking a prison coach in Holloway, north London. The hunt for five others who also escaped continues.

THE Guardian won the top three awards in the British Environment and Media Awards including campaign of the year for coverage of the Ken Saro-Wiwa trial.



Two-term triumph for Bill Clinton

SO BILL CLINTON won nearly 50 per cent of the popular vote: a triumph for a president who in mid-term was being labelled a probable second-time loser. But only the same percentage of all eligible citizens could be bothered to vote at all: a failure which had been predictable all along. Once again the election of the world's most powerful president in the world's greatest democracy falls a long way short of the ideal. The American people are judged by commentators to have endorsed continuity and the politics of the centre — hence the paradox of victory for a Democratic president while his party fails to win back the House or Senate.

Yet the message which the American people actually delivered — those who bothered to vote — is a good deal more complex and negative. Opinion polls suggest that half of those who voted doubted the president's trustworthiness: fortunately for Mr Clinton a larger percentage had an unfavourable opinion of Speaker Newt Gingrich — the burden Mr Dole could never shed. Fortunately too, a majority said that issues matter more than a candidate's character. The decisive issue remained the economy where a majority believes that the country is moving in the right direction. Mr Clinton has also shown remarkable success in attracting a majority of women voters — by a greater margin than his opponent gained the majority of men voters. Another poll statistic should also prompt reflection. Half of Mr Clinton's supporters are said to have emerged from the voting booth with second thoughts about the president. How fortunate again that a greater percentage had similar misgivings after voting for Bob Dole!

In a campaign where both contestants manoeuvred for the middle ground, Mr Clinton has had a clear advantage all along. He has been less encumbered by his "liberal" wing than Mr Dole has been by his right wing: by shifting to the centre in the second half of his term, Mr Clinton was already in occupation. It has been a largely policy-free campaign which leaves political analysts grasping for clues as to what Mr Clinton will actually do in his second term. The White House is trying to fill the gap with predictions that he will leave behind a substantial "legacy". This remains less the language of policy substance than of presidential image, which may also become vulnerable to more negative interpretations as the Republicans renew their attack upon his character.

It is of course possible to take a more comfortable view both of Mr Clinton's policy deficit and of the poor turn-out which returned him to office. The drift towards the centre, it may be argued, is a desirable phenomenon in a less polarised world and voter apathy is a price worth paying for it. From a foreign perspective it may also be suggested that Mr Clinton's avoidance of radical policies at home should leave him with more incentive to seek radical solutions to problems abroad — such as the Middle East and Northern Ireland. But American society is hardly in such good shape that it can be left to coast along, and the low turnout also points up its own social problems. Not only is the 49 per cent of eligible citizens who voted the lowest for decades: it has happened in spite of 11 million new voters being registered through "motor voting" and similar procedures to make registration easier. Special efforts had been made to recruit the young, the poor and the black, yet they remain the categories least likely to vote, and the most vulnerable in society. Should this not be the real challenge for those building bridges to a new century?

To charge, or not to charge?

THE BRITISH MUSEUM not only contains some of the great treasures of the world, but is also a treasure in itself. Sir Robert Smirke's Greek Revival building was constructed in the 1750s to accommodate 100,000 visitors a year. It is now bursting with 6 million a year — more than any other museum of its kind and 1 million more than the Louvre. Its trustees are proud that it has never charged anyone for admission. Like blood, Britain gives it away free. But not for much longer if the Government has its way. This year's grant was cut by 3 per cent with the expectation of further cuts in future on top of the £3 million a year rent it will cease to receive when its tenant, the British Library, decamps in 1998. By the end of the decade, the museum's funding shortfall could reach 20 per cent. The trustees are having to consider unpleasant options, including cuts in manpower of 20 per cent plus admission charges of up to £5. Does it matter?

Few would object if overseas visitors — particularly from countries such as France which charge visitors through the nose for admission to their museums — had to pay while UK citizens, or at the very least local residents, were exempt. But that would require some sort of identity card which may only be possible at the local level. Some economists would argue that since the congestion happens at weekends — particularly Sundays — charges could be introduced then, leaving weekdays free. But that wouldn't rectify the finances. No one doubts that the museum — like every other organisation in Britain — could be run with fewer staff, especially if more use was made of automated surveillance techniques. But that won't solve the financial problem either. In the end, it comes down to a straight choice between government funding or admission charges. When "voluntary" charges were introduced at the Victoria and Albert Museum admissions fell from 1.7 million to 1.2 million. Admissions at the Natural History Museum fell to 1.4 million from 2.5 million after the introduction of charges, though the museum authorities believe the figure of 2.5 million was grossly inflated because of a flawed system of counting people entering the museum when it was free.

The fact that a number of museums in Britain already levy charges makes it difficult to argue that the character of the British Museum will somehow be fatally undermined if it does the same. Of course it won't. But that's not the point. Free admission to museums has been a defining national characteristic of Britain. The freedom to be able to browse in a museum or art gallery, even for half an hour, is a small but vibrant British freedom which it isn't worth destroying just to raise a few million towards tax cuts designed to win an election. The salami slicing that defines the Treasury's approach to public expenditure on the arts is also slicing off subtle freedoms that, once gone, will never return.

Pity the world's poor and hungry

THE PARADOX facing the World Food Summit in Rome this week is no less grim for being very familiar. At an aggregate level, the world still has enough to eat. But individual people do not eat around an aggregate table. Many dine in comfort. Others continue to get by. And a large minority (800 million) struggle for food in overcrowded slums, on impoverished soils, often amidst an abundance which they cannot afford. Africa has the highest proportion of the chronically undernourished (41 per cent). But Asia, in spite of its "miracles", still has the highest number — more than half a billion.

A host of non-governmental agencies have issued briefings for Rome: they all make compelling sense. The Institute of Development Studies at Sussex University puts the problem succinctly. Cases of genuine food shortage (after floods in South Asia or civil wars in central Africa) are relatively rare. "All over the world, it is the poor who go hungry" — never the rich.

The World Development Movement points out that even in the United States an estimated 30 million people suffer from malnutrition. The global food market, dominated by a few giant corporations, makes matters worse. Dependence on food imports creates rural unemployment and insecurity. Food aid is diminishing as the market takes over. A Panos Briefing warns that companies will only release food "in response to price opportunities, not need".

It says much about international priorities that the Rome conference is already being written off as a "talking shop". In spite of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's efforts, no new money is expected to be generated. Of the Group of Seven leading industrial nations, only Italy, the host country, is sending a senior figure. The crisis in Zaire will not be directly addressed. Please, just for once, could the world's leaders surprise us by taking seriously what remains the world's biggest shame?

A minefield beckons for those in UN boots

Martin Woollacott

THE CONGO operation in the sixties almost destroyed the United Nations. It killed the most formidable secretary general the organisation has had, pushed the UN into a financial crisis, split the Western powers which had previously consistently supported the world body, and almost brought peacekeeping efforts to a permanent end. And, although secession was averted, it helped create the conditions in which one of the worst of Africa's regimes took root and one of the most corrupt dictators took power in what became Zaire.

The Congo was an object lesson in how international forces can be used and abused by local actors as well as destructively manipulated by outside powers. Three decades later, the UN can be said to be still recovering from that failure. No wonder, then, that the UN and many countries are reluctant to rush troops to Central Africa.

The deployment of an international force to the region threatens to involve the troops, their commanders, the civilian aid workers and the UN itself in not one, not two, not even three, but in four wars. The first is the Rwanda war whose original spilling over into Zaire, in the shape of hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees, began this crisis. The second is the Burundi war, which has overlapped with the Rwanda fight from the beginning but which has intensified since the coup there earlier this year. The third is the local war in eastern Zaire between Zairean troops and Hutu extremists from the camps and local people of Tutsi ethnicity. The fourth is the potential fight in Zaire itself, with a range of opposition groups based inside and outside the country contending for the succession to President Mobutu Sésé Séko. The most substantial are represented in the capital and pursue a legal path, but one group, of indeterminate strength, is trying to exploit the vacuum in the eastern borderlands and is looking for an alliance of convenience with the Rwandan regime.

How serious such armed seekers of power are is not yet clear. But, in the lifetime of a UN military operation, and given Mobutu's state of health, they might become serious. The eagerness with which the parties are signalling their readiness for an international force is an index of the difficulties that may arise. For all concerned see the establishment of a UN force in eastern Zaire as a development they could use to their advantage. Mobutu was saved from virtually complete international isolation when Hutu refugees crossed his border in huge numbers two years ago. He underwent a quasi-rehabilitation as UN agencies and Western governments were forced to seek his co-operation. Now his troops have been pushed out of parts of eastern Zaire by forces marginally better organised than his are. It might be better for him if UN troops were in charge rather than his enemies. Mobutu's main opposition, significantly, is against a UN force. It portrays him as a man selling the country out to foreigners and allowing the establishment of a "Hutuland" in the north-east.

The Rwandan government remains hostile to a force led by France, the power keenest to intervene, because of its experience in 1994 when the action of French forces, whether by design or inadvertence, led to the escape of most of the Hutu leadership and its military forces. It now says it will accept a force if it is "neutral". The interest of the Rwandan leaders lies in any development which will help them destroy armed Hutu opponents and to deprive those opponents of a population base of refugees, which they can tax, recruit and propagandise. It would be served either by the repatriation of the refugees or by the flight of the refugees into the interior of Zaire, out of effective range of the Rwandan border, or by a combination of the two. A buffer force of UN troops which either kept the refugees distant from the border or effectively filtered out armed elements before returning refugees to Zaire would be their best hope.

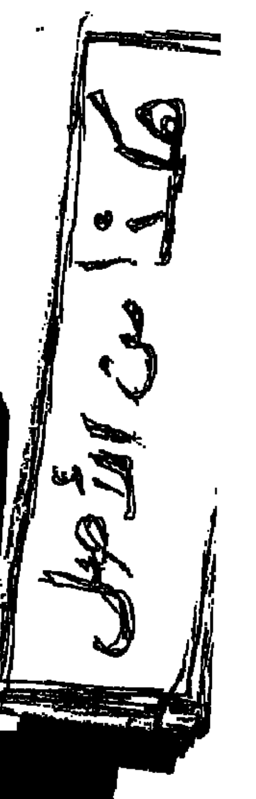
What would not be in their interests would be a restoration of the situation in which aid agencies were keeping a million or more Hutu refugees alive but were also subsidising and assisting the extremists who dominated the camps, raided into both Rwanda and Burundi and nursed long-term ambitions of reversing their defeats in both of those countries. What followed was a covert Rwandan campaign to disrupt the extremists. This disruption, it ought to be said, should, in the broadest view, be welcomed, because the prospect of an endless ethnic war across the international borders is a horrific one and the prospect of an extremist re-entry in force into Rwanda even more so. But it has already led to great suffering and could lead to more. The question is how to relieve that suffering without recreating a safe haven for killers as well as for kids.

THE TANGLE of ambitions and interests means that the dispatch of an international force to Zaire is a truly difficult undertaking. It would have to be a determined and sophisticated effort, aimed at humanitarian relief but with the wariest of eyes cocked on the local actors who, within hours of the first troops flying in, would begin to exert pressures to bend the new arrivals to their purposes.

In everything from the siting of a refugee camp or a military base to the choice of interpreters or food suppliers, such a force can so easily be subverted. Above all, it would have to bear in mind that it might well find itself embroiled not only in the affairs of Hutus and Tutsis in three countries but in the future of Zaire, arguably the most politically devastated state in Africa.

The Red Cross president, Cornelio Sommaruga, said last week that there was "no other option" to the dispatch of an international force which could create the secure conditions to enable relief to again reach the refugees.

The balance is shifting toward the dispatch of some kind of UN force. Given the human need, that can hardly be opposed. But let it be done with care, with skill and with political sophistication. For the UN, Zaire, of all countries, is not a place in which to repeat the mistakes of the past.



A cancer eats at the heart of Israel

The candle-lit vigils commemorating Yitzhak Rabin's assassination mask the fact that the country is on the brink of civil war, says **Ian Black**

NETANYAHU'S PATENT PEACE PROCESSOR

NOW THEY call it Rabin Square, that stark concrete expanse in front of Tel Aviv town hall. Earlier this month it was lit by thousands of candles flickering in memory of the leader who promised Israel a better future and died with a song of peace on his lips.

Many of Yitzhak Rabin's countrymen wept at the rally marking a year since his assassination, but many were grieving less for the fallen prime minister with the gravelly voice than for a vision that has gone, and looks as if it cannot be restored.

Rabin's family commemorated the murder a few days before, on the Hebrew date of his death, in a grim, introspective ceremony at his Jerusalem graveside. However, most of the Israelis who mourned him and what he represented looked to that unlovely Tel Aviv square, the site of the killing, to reflect on its meaning, the devastating consequences it has already brought — and those it has yet to bring.

It has been a long and painful year since that shocking Saturday night and, though it may be hard to believe, things look worse now, far worse even, than they did then. Before November 4, 1995 you could argue with reasonable certainty that under Rabin, warrior-turned-peacemaker, the century-long Arab-Israeli conflict was winding down. Now it seems to be winding up again. And on bad days it is hard to imagine when and how it can ever end.

Peace has been postponed, and peace postponed could mean war. In the north there are palpable, nerve-jangling tensions with Syria — recent weeks have seen troop movements, apocalyptic warnings of missile attacks on cities, combat aircraft scrambling on sudden alert. Closer to home, along the twisting borders between Israel and the disjointed Palestinian enclaves of the West Bank and Gaza, bloody confrontations loom.

New military threats are one consequence of what young Yigal Amir achieved when he fired his pistol at the prime minister's back: his divinely-sanctioned goal, he admitted, was to halt the peace process that Rabin began at Oslo and sealed with his iconic handshake with Yasser Arafat on the White House lawn.

Amir understood, instinctively at least, that in the Middle East, unlike the European Union, if you stop cycling towards your goal you fall. It didn't happen at once, so for a while Rabin could be mourned as the martyr who died for a peace that would continue. Shimon Peres, his canny but less popular successor, vowed to go on with the negotiating process; Bill Clinton and King Hussein and Arafat — too feeble in the face of his own violent fundamentalists — all hoped it would. It didn't. It got stuck. And last month it finally toppled over.

But the other important result of Amir's action was internal: to produce a deeper understanding of the divisions that plague Israeli society and cast real doubt over whether democracy can co-exist with a zealous ethnic nationalism. And these twin consequences come together at the next flashpoint in this deadly drama — Hebron.

Agreement on an Israeli pullout from the West Bank city, already months behind schedule, could come any time (American pressure on both sides is almost irresistible), but the 400 Israeli settlers who live in the heart of Hebron — the most fanatical, uncompromising and racist of their kind — have made clear that they will do all they can to torpedo it.

If they succeed — and vengeful, anti-Arafat Palestinian militants may help them to do so — there is likely to be a re-run of last month's violent clashes in Nablus, Ramallah and Gaza, where Arafat's policemen, armed under the Oslo terms, turned their guns on the Israelis after the provocative opening of the East Jerusalem tunnel.

Hebron will be doubly testing because it is already etched in gore in the history of the conflict: most of the city's small Jewish population was massacred in 1929 during unrest over prayer rights in Jerusalem. For the other side the last atrocity was more recent — the slaughter of 29 Palestinians by a Jewish gunman called Baruch Goldstein in February 1994.

Evacuating Hebron is an important test for Rabin's successor, Binyamin "Bibi" Netanyahu. It will be the first time that the Likud leader has dared to do what his Labour predecessor died for — surrender parts of the country occupied in 1967 to Arab rule. The way things look it could the first and last time he orders such a move.

One good reason is that it could kill him too. It is far from fanciful to imagine that Netanyahu, loathed by the left for a glib, soundbite-driven rhetoric that barely conceals the lack of any coherent strategy, could be the next target of the extreme right: the obsessive security that surrounds him — for a man who made a career out of the pseudo-philosophical study of terrorism — shows the threat is taken seriously.

Netanyahu became prime minister by a whisker: new electoral arrangements gave him a personal mandate to rule whatever the composition of the coalition he put together. But since entering office in May he has become a figure of fun, combining arrogance with shortsightedness, insulting the Arabs, alienating Israel's élites and frittering away the dignity of leadership in a society that can be cruelly judgmental at the best of times.

Netanyahu is part of the problem facing his country, but he is also a symptom of a deeper paralysis: personally he looks to wider horizons, is mesmerised by the good relations with the United States that allow Israel to punch above its weight internationally, but at home he is also bound by those who look inwards and backwards, religious fundamentalists and narrow-minded nationalists who are inspired more by Tehran than New York.

Too many Israelis recoiled as they stared into the abyss of civil war: for one Likud minister the assassination was no more than "a slip", an individual aberration that should not be used to tar an entire section of the population — those who do not accept that Palestinians are as entitled to a state as Israelis are. Last year Netanyahu called it McCarthyism to say that he was guilty of "incitement" because of his furious campaign against Oslo. But at the family commemoration Leah Rabin looked away in stony silence as he laid a wreath on her husband's grave.

Hebron will be doubly testing because it is already etched in gore in the history of the conflict

Liberal Israelis now admit that they fell victim to a dangerous illusion, ignoring the growing strength of the right, of fundamentalist intolerance and mystical religion, because in the two honeymoon years between Oslo and the assassination, their world changed so dramatically for the better: the Rabin-Arafat handshake was that rare event — a photo-opportunity that really meant something. It represented an historic reconciliation, and if — as Arafat's Palestinian critics charged — it meant surrender to Israel's terms, humiliating recognition that Zionism had won, then it was one which, viewed dynamically as a process, promised more than they could ever hope to achieve by violence.

And it was genuine: Rabin's conversion was not a tactical shift, a ploy to trap the Palestinians in bantustans. True, the terms of Oslo were too limited and its benefits for Palestinians too few. But the process could have developed, and was doing so until Hamas suicide bombers claimed 68 Israeli lives last February and March and did so much to guarantee Netanyahu's victory.

Oslo brought real benefits, in inward investment, tourism, international acceptability and diplomatic kudos — normality, in a word — that showed that negotiating seriously with the Palestinians worked wonders, even when the really tough issues — settlements, Jerusalem and final status — were on hold. Jordan joined Egypt in the circle of peace. And Rabin, with the unshakeable confidence of the old soldier, moved towards a deal that would have returned virtually the entire Golan Heights to Syria.

Rabin had offered real change: for a man in his 70s it was a remarkable transformation. Poignantly, his last act in the square that Saturday night was to embrace a young punk rock star, Aviv Gefen, an androgynous, unmilitary, distinctly unmacho figure who had called on youngsters to avoid the draft — the heresy reflecting the changing priorities of an Israel that was psychologically ready to end the conflict. For Rabin that was the mirror image, on the home front, of his handshake with the PLO leader. Security, the old warhorse was saying, meant peace.

People genuinely miss him — even if the overall effect of the candlelit vigils, the sad, jokey bumper stickers and the memorial albums is sometimes cloying and self-indulgent, and masks the tougher political truths that his death exposed. One of them was touched on by the chief of staff of the Israel Defence Forces, the position Rabin held at the hour of maximum glory in 1967, before the taste of victory went sour.

Major-General Amnon Shahak warned that the army, once revered as the repository of Israel's national identity, was becoming a "punch bag" for the frustrations of politicians.

Shahak complained that playing the stock exchange or travelling abroad were now more admired than volunteering for the élite army units whose ranks are now filled by religious youngsters, better versed in Torah than technology, and more likely to obey their rabbi than their platoon commander.

Rabin and his generals got on famously well, but under Netanyahu they have been frozen out. The security services let it be known that they were not consulted about the opening of the Jerusalem tunnel — the subtext being that if you have the opportunity to make peace, you should not squander it.

Israel's men on horseback are not about to storm the Knesset, but they do want a settlement more than their government. Shahak and his staff know, as Rabin knew, that the cancer of occupation was eating into their own society, that chasing Palestinian children through the alleys of Nablus and Gaza was wearing down the motivation of Israeli conscripts. Soon they could be there again, but this time fighting an armed revolt that will make the intifada look tame.

In 1988, at the height of the uprising, Rabin called on his men to break Palestinian bones. Later, he recognised that the status quo could not be sustained, and he changed. But the brutality remains: a West Bank settler has been charged with beating a 10-year-old Palestinian boy to death; another threw scalding tea at a leftwing Israeli MP visiting Hebron. The violence will go on.

Now winds from the north are casting a new chill. Opinion is divided about the likelihood of a short spring war with Syria, though a limited strike by Hafez al-Assad on the Golan front, or a few Scuds loosed off at the Israeli rear, might galvanise international efforts to save the peace that Rabin made.

War could also bring down the Netanyahu government. But would any new coalition find it easier to deal with the tough questions about Jerusalem and the settlements, to crack down on the rightwingers and the skullcap-wearers preparing to fight for Hebron with God on their side; or to re-open the window of opportunity that has slammed shut in the past year?

Outside pressure might help. Jacques Chirac's grandstanding visit reminded Netanyahu that Europeans, as well as Americans, care about the Middle East, though their leverage is limited. Malcolm Rifkind did not get far with calls to ease restrictions on Palestinians, but he pressed on anyway.

European support strengthens Arafat, but Israel only pays attention to America. After the Gulf war George Bush cajoled Yitzhak Shamir into attending the Madrid peace conference — the historic start of negotiations between Israel and all its Arab enemies.

There are no quick fixes now, though in the longer term the newly re-elected President Clinton could persuade Israelis that they need to be saved from themselves, that more than $3 billion in annual aid may not be the best way to do it, and that the price of not having a settlement with the Palestinians may be too great to bear.

For the moment, though, grieving for Yitzhak Rabin and contemplating their bitter, consuming divisions, Israelis look more than ever like their biblical forebears — a people that dwells alone.

Ian Black, the Guardian's diplomatic editor, was the paper's Jerusalem correspondent from 1984-93 and is the author of Israel's Secret Wars

UK will pay for its low-wage strategy

Low costs have attracted investors to Britain, but at the price of quality growth, argues **Larry Elliott**

ONE of comedy's finest moments is the scene in Fawlty Towers in which Basil flails his broken-down car with the branch from a tree. The year was 1975, the car was British and the moment seemed to sum up everything wrong with industry at the time.

Michael Heseltine, the deputy prime minister, certainly sees it that way, and he told the Confederation of British Industry meeting in Harrogate this week just how the Government's reforms of the past 17 years have turned the sick man of Europe into the envy of the world.

The Conservatives' view is simple: look at our record. Since 1979, Britain has halved its productivity gap with Germany, exports are at a record level, the UK is taking 40 per cent of inward investment in Europe, unemployment is down. What is more, Britain has a vibrant service sector, with the City and retailers showing Europe the way.

It shows what you can do when you control costs by taming the unions, making labour markets more flexible, and opposing the minimum wage and social chapter.

Shadow chancellor Gordon Brown sees things differently. He, too, spoke to the CBI on Monday, but put forward a more complex argument: Labour accepts that industrial success has to be built on a vibrant market economy, but the Conservatives are taking Britain down a blind alley. Mounting competition from Asia, Latin America and eastern Europe means there is no long-term future in being a low-cost, low-wage country, Mr Brown said.

However the electorate views these claims in six months' time, Labour's analysis fits more comfortably with the record of the past 150 years. The historian Correlli Barnett concludes in The Lost Victory (Macmillan): "Britain as an industrial society had failed from the 1840s onwards to adapt fast enough and radically enough to meet the challenges of new technologies and new competitors."

Barnett has plenty of evidence to support his case. Consider this gem from Richard Cobden in 1835: "Our only chance of national prosperity lies in the timely remodelling of our system, so as to put it as nearly as possible upon an equality with the improved management of the Americans."

The 1929 Balfour Royal Commission on Trade and Industry said Britain was riddled with attitudes and methods caused by "the conservative habits of mind which prevent many British employers from pursuing so energetic and so ruthless a policy of scrapping old plant and replacing it by new as their competitors in [say] America or Germany . . ." The right feels that this may have been true up to 1979, but that since then there has been a renaissance of industry. If there has been a rebirth, it is the equivalent of 15th century Italy without Bernini, Michelangelo or Leonardo de Vinci.

Relative manufacturing productivity may have improved in the past 17 years, but Britain's output record is the worst in the Group of Seven leading industrial nations. The shrinking of the industrial base has meant manufacturing trade has been in the red since 1982 and this has had a knock-on effect on the current account. There is a simple equation here: net exporters of manufactures — Germany and Japan — run current account surpluses; net importers of manufactures — Britain and America — run current account deficits.

In the 1980s some felt that manufacturing had ceased to matter. Services were the future, and here Britain reigned supreme. This argument has two big drawbacks. First, global manufacturing trade is four times as big as trade in services. Second, Britain's record in services is not all it is cracked up to be.

A recent four-country study by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research showed that, in terms of productivity in marketable services — finance, transport and the distributive trades — Britain lags further behind France and Germany than it does in manufacturing.

"The common view that the UK is particularly good at services is not supported by these results. Even the view that UK performance is comparatively better in services seems to be true only relative to the US."

The analysis holds true even when the original three categories of services are broken down into 10 sub-sets. The idea that the French railways are over-manned is hardly borne out by figures showing that French productivity in transport is 40 per cent higher than Britain's.

Ministers might argue that these statistics are a function of Britain's lack of a minimum wage. There is some truth in this. French and German retailers cannot afford to employ armies of supermarket shelf-fillers, and so offer an inferior service. As such, Nigel Lawson was right when, as chancellor of the exchequer in 1984, he said that "many of the jobs of the future will be in labour-intensive service industries — not so much lo-tech as no-tech".

Japan can support chronically low productivity in its service sector because it has a big, high-productivity manufacturing base. A small manufacturing base supporting a swollen, low-productivity service sector inevitably means low growth and slowly rising living standards.

The Government pays lip-service to the idea that Britain should be going upmarket, but at the same time its low-cost philosophy is damping down industry. This is true even in hi-tech industries, where the emphasis on being a low-cost centre has meant Britain attracted plenty of screwdriver plants but has yet to break into the R&D end of the global production process.

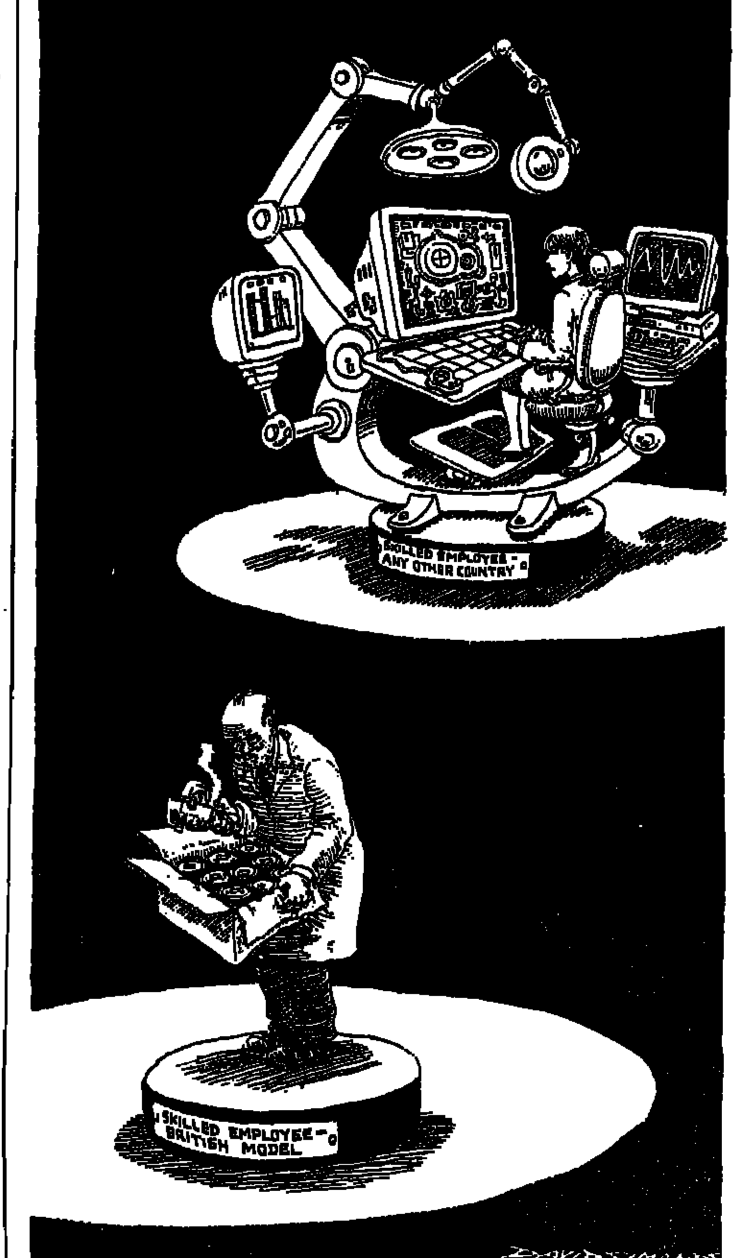
Perversely, this trend has been accentuated by de-unionisation. A stronger voice for labour, coupled with the introduction of a minimum wage, would help Britain move upmarket. It would mean firms would have to focus on reskilling and retaining staff, perhaps even giving them a say in the company's future.

The objective reasons why Britain lacks skills are easy to detect. According to research by Ken Mayhew and Ewart Keep, more than half of Britain's workforce will be part-time, self-employed or temporary by 2001, R&D spending is massively concentrated in a handful of industries, 25 per cent of training lasts for less than a day, and more than one-fifth of jobs are in the low-paid, low-skill personal and protective services sector.

Product quality has improved. Boring Morris Itals have been replaced by sleek Rover 200s. The question is whether Britain's design and quality performance has improved relative to its competitors'. Mayhew and Keep say it has not, and that the growing polarisation between rich and poor in Britain has meant it is in the short-term interest of industry to concentrate on cheapness. Rightly, they stress the difference between efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency is about cutting costs, making assets sweat harder, turning up the wick under a demoralised work force. Effectiveness is about boosting outputs rather than cutting inputs.

The Government's obsession with deregulation is strangely at odds with the pick 'n' mix ethos of these post-modernist times. Going downmarket may make sense for the individual firm or sector, but represents market failure for the economy as a whole.

Labour's corrective — the university for industry, re-skilling, the minimum wage, a better deal for the unions — depends on the right mesh with the demand side of the economy. It could run aground. But at a time when the Government seems intent on treating employees like Basil treats Manuel, the Opposition is posing the right questions.



Euro squabble irks industry

BUSINESS leaders this week warned that political bickering could prevent British firms from reaping the benefits of a single European currency, *write Simon Beavis and Richard Thomas*.

On the eve of the Confederation of British Industry's 20th national conference in Harrogate, leading industrialists called for strong political leadership on European monetary union to ensure that the UK kept its options open.

With a MORI poll of nearly 1,700 firms, commissioned by the CBI and the British Chambers of Commerce, showing a shift towards a single currency, CBI president Sir Colin Marshall said: "This disproves the theory that business has become more Eurosceptic over the last 12 months."

But David Richardson, BCC president, said a more Euro-friendly mood among firms was being undermined by political squabbles. Business needed a government "clearly committed to Europe, influential in the key decisions . . . and able to give business the certainty with which to plan for the future".

The survey shows 71 per cent of companies contacted favoured joining a single currency in 1999 or later, or at least keeping the options for entry open.

In Brief

AIRBUS Industrie has secured one of the world's largest orders — an $18.4 billion deal to supply up to 400 aircraft to modernise USAir's fleet. British Aerospace, which has a 20 per cent share in the European consortium and builds Airbus wings, will be one of the main beneficiaries of the deal. BAe received further good news when it clinched a $1.5 billion contract to supply Hawk trainer jets to the Australian Defence Force, which will help secure thousands of jobs in the UK.

EUROPEAN competition commissioner Karel Van Miert said he was seeking further information about British Telecom's $19.6 billion bid for its US partner MCI before deciding how it will be scrutinised. Meanwhile arch-rival AT&T is preparing to lodge a formal complaint over the proposed deal with the US regulatory body, the Federal Communications Commission.

THE Serious Fraud Office is investigating possible insider dealing in shares of Eurotunnel, the Channel tunnel operator. The deals are thought to have been carried out on the London and Paris stock exchanges in 1994.

ANGLO-DUTCH consumer goods conglomerate Unilever overcame poor summer sales of ice cream and the mad cow disease crisis to announce a 5 per cent jump to $1.3 billion in third-quarter pre-tax profits.

INVESTORS hoping to cash in on tips over the Internet do so at their peril. That was the message from the Securities and Exchange Commission as it ordered a freeze on the assets of Systems of Excellence, a maker of video tele-conferencing equipment, for allegedly manipulating its share price via the information superhighway.

JAPANESE prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto has called for a broad deregulation of the nation's financial markets, saying he wants to lift Japan's economy by making it operate more like the free market system of Europe and America.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates November 11	Sterling rates November 4
Australia	2.0903-2.0925	2.0915-2.0935
Austria	17.35-17.37	17.52-17.54
Belgium	50.80-50.91	51.29-51.37
Canada	2.1950-2.1967	2.1990-2.2007
Denmark	9.49-9.49	9.57-9.57
France	8.34-8.35	8.42-8.43
Germany	2.4667-2.4686	2.4911-2.4929
Hong Kong	12.72-12.73	12.73-12.73
Ireland	0.9955-0.9969	0.9979-0.9995
Italy	2,487-2,491	2,501-2,503
Japan	183.01-183.25	187.30-187.50
Netherlands	2.7688-2.7636	2.7926-2.7945
New Zealand	2.3198-2.3224	2.3221-2.3252
Norway	10.37-10.38	10.46-10.47
Portugal	249.95-250.18	252.28-252.43
Spain	207.79-207.92	209.86-210.02
Sweden	10.85-10.86	10.86-10.88
Switzerland	2.0742-2.0764	2.0895-2.0911
USA	1.6459-1.6466	1.5466-1.6472
ECU	1.2885-1.2904	1.2982-1.2996

FTSE100 Share Index down 13.7 at 3914.4. FTSE 250 Index up 22.8 at 4418.4. Gold up $2.25 at $380.75.

Edging backwards into intervention

Daniel Vernet on the humanitarian dilemma preoccupying the West

WHEN do you go in? When do you get out? The international community, particularly Western countries, are facing this dilemma on two continents. "A war of the rich" was the rather ill-advised description by United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali of the conflict in Yugoslavia, one which he would certainly not apply to Africa.

However, both regions raise the same fundamental problems for the UN. Should they accept France's proposal to send a force to establish a security zone in eastern Zaire in order to enable humanitarian organisations to help the refugees? Should a military presence be maintained in Bosnia now that the mandate of the UN's Implementation Force (I-for) is theoretically due to run out on December 21?

Faced with massacres and ethnic cleansing, the international community will not allow itself to stand idly by; but at the same time it is loath to intervene. Ultimately, it may set so many preconditions that its intervention is more risky, more costly and less effective than would have been the case if prompt action had been taken.

Those countries whose decisions carry weight have reason to be cautious. The Somali example, to say nothing of the Vietnam experience, held back the US from committing itself militarily alongside the Europeans in the former Yugoslavia. Operation Turquoise in Rwanda two years ago earned France more criticism than praise, so Paris is understandably not prepared to be exposed again on its own in Africa.

Despite the recent round of visits to Africa by US Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who would have liked to see an African intervention force set up under US supervision, the Clinton administration remains reluctant. The situation today is not quite the same as when, to justify the US stance on Bosnia, White House special security adviser Anthony Lake pointed out that the primary task of the US's armed forces was not to carry out peace-keeping missions, but to win wars.

So Washington devised a plan of action that set at least six conditions for US intervention — the operation must have precise, pre-defined objectives; it must have a good chance of success; it must be limited in time; be of reasonable cost; enjoy public support; and, lastly, US soldiers would have to be under US command.

These are the conditions that the US set when I-for was formed, and it will set these conditions again before becoming involved in any operation around the borders of Zaire and Rwanda.

For their part, the Europeans have maintained a clear position: if the Americans go in, we go in, they say. Now that he has won a second term, President Bill Clinton could consider developing I-for's role despite the reservations of a Congress dominated by Republicans.

Ambassadors from Nato member countries have discussed the question and a final decision will be made after the international conference on Bosnia, due to take place in Paris on November 14.

The Nato military committee has worked out four scenarios: withdrawal of all international troops; maintaining, for a period of one year, a deterrent force of 20,000 to 30,000 men, with support units from neighbouring countries; deploying a "deterrent and stabilisation" force to support I-for (the name will very probably be changed) in its task of helping to set up a civil administration; and, lastly, a broader-based version of I-for with increased involvement of military elements in civilian tasks. The West wants to avoid any potential snags, such as setting up a *de facto* military administration and becoming committed to turning I-for into a permanent occupation force.

The solution is expected to be closer to the third scenario — a contingent of 20,000 men (one-third of the number now in Bosnia), with the US contributing a quarter of the troops. Americans and Europeans are aware that the situation is not sufficiently stable for them to be able to pull out of Bosnia, but they want to keep an escape route open.

THIS CONDITION could be met more easily in the Great Lakes region of Africa if the international community goes along with the tasks outlined by French foreign minister, Hervé de Charette. They are: the establishment of a security zone for humanitarian purposes and for allowing refugees to return to the camps; and enabling humanitarian organisations to feed them. But the Americans and the British remain sceptical.

Their doubts were reflected in the London Financial Times, which questioned whether the purpose of this was to ensure the refugees went back to their Rwanda homes, or to guarantee them security in Zaire. It wasn't enough to feed these people — a demilitarised zone guarded by an international force would be needed along the border.

This line of reasoning is intended to discourage intervention. None the less, if a humanitarian operation is to be effective, it has to be backed up by the threat of force.

However legitimate the argument that momentous decisions should not be taken lightly, there is something craven, even criminal, about the posturing that goes on in diplomatic circles, as if the international community had been caught off-guard by the sudden discovery of these hundreds of thousands of refugees in eastern Zaire.

(November 8)



Victim of war . . . A Rwandan boy waits for water at a Ugandan refugee camp after fleeing the fighting in Zaire

Recognition for Croatia undeserved

EDITORIAL

THERE is something astonishing about Croatia being admitted to the Council of Europe, that institution whose job is to monitor democracy and human rights in its member countries.

The Zagreb regime and its all-powerful leader, President Franjo Tudjman, can scarcely boast of an honourable record in this sphere, whether it is the independence of the press — which is on probation, as Reporters Without Borders activists pointed out at the enrolment ceremony — or the lot of political opponents subjected to constant pressure.

The Croatian government's non-co-operation with the International Court in The Hague, the support it is giving to Herzogovinian separatists, the difficulties encountered by refugees trying to get back to their homes, or the initiatives that may appear to be an attempt to rehabilitate the 1940 pro-Nazi regime should have been reason enough to delay the admission of Croatia to the Council. Moreover, representatives of European governments hesitated over the decision last May.

By finally admitting Croatia, the Council has presented Tudjman with an unexpected bonus, and one that again demonstrates his skill at dodging international criticism. And all this while his counterparts in the former Yugoslavia — the Bosnians and Serbs — appear to be more exposed to criticism from the United States.

In Saravejo, for example, the US demanded, and got, the resignation of the deputy defence minister because he was suspected of being too close to Iran.

The US reaction to the recent parliamentary elections in Yugoslavia took the form of a State Department note saying it had long been "very worried" about the development of democracy in that country. No such criticism has been made of Croatia, where there is no lack of evidence for such concern. For a start, the opposition has been banned from taking its place in the Zagreb municipal council in spite of winning a majority of seats in a legitimate election in September 1995.

True, other countries, just as unworthy of being described as democracies, have got into this catch-all organisation that has become the Council of Europe. There is Turkey, for example, which is incapable of improving its appalling judicial and police practices; and Russia, which was admitted to the Council at the very moment it was fighting a brutal war in Chechenia. That was a precedent the Zagreb government — and its opposition — did not fail to point out when the Council initially paused over Croatia's inclusion.

There is a limit, therefore, to the indignation that Croatia's admission is likely to provoke, all the more so since most of the opposition leaders in the countries concerned are keen to point out that membership of the Council may also help them by giving them a lever to put pressure on their own governments. This pragmatic view of the Council's role is generous but naïve. In fact, it strips it of a part of its significance and its mission.

(November 8)

Sihanouk blocks offer on amnesty

Jean-Claude Pomonti in Bangkok

CAMBODIA'S King Norodom Sihanouk celebrated his 74th birthday quietly on October 31 with a Buddhist purification ceremony in the capital, but he did not announce the broad general amnesty that was expected. On October 27, the king published a statement saying he was abandoning the idea of any amnesty because of protests from students belonging "to a certain political party".

The party in question, inherited from the system the Vietnamese set up in 1979, is the Cambodian People's Party (PPC), which shares power with the royalist Funcinpec of King Sihanouk's son and prime minister, Prince Ranariddh. In the past two years, in particular, the PPC has been recruiting heavily in student circles in preparation for the general election, expected to take place in 1998.

The students petitioned King Sihanouk, objecting to the proposed amnesty for Norodom Sirivudh, Sihanouk's half-brother and former foreign minister, sentenced *in absentia* to 10 years' imprisonment for allegedly expressing in private his intention to assassinate Hun Sen, the second prime minister and vice-chairman of the PPC. Prince Sirivudh is now living in France.

The present situation arose from the amnesty that King Sihanouk granted on September 14 — with strong reservations and under pressure from the two co-prime ministers — to Ieng Sary, the defecting Khmer Rouge leader. If Ieng Sary, formerly the third-ranking figure in the Pol Pot regime that killed probably 2 million Cambodians between 1975 and 1979, was given an amnesty, the protesters cried, then how could the same favour be withheld from convicted men who had committed far less serious crimes?

Hun Sen argued that restoration of peace was the only reason that Ieng Sary was granted an amnesty. He was, therefore, opposed to extending the amnesty to politicians convicted for reasons that had nothing to do with the peace process.

Though it has been careful not to say it out loud, the PPC believes the general amnesty that was expected on October 31 was primarily intended to prepare the ground for Prince Sirivudh's return to Cambodia.

On his return, Sirivudh, who was general secretary of the Funcipec until the beginning of this year, would have given a boost to a party marginalised in the state structure by an all-powerful PPC.

King Sihanouk's previous attempt to strengthen his authority goes back to 1994. Hun Sen put an end to that by sending him a note reminding him that under the 1993 constitution, "the king reigns but does not govern".

Having returned to Cambodia last July after an absence of three years, King Sihanouk will have to make do with cultivating the image of a monarch mindful of his subjects' welfare, but with no political power at the moment.

(November 5)

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
November 17 1996

Jean-Michel Frodon reviews Bertrand Tavernier's new film and **Philippe-Jean Catinchi** the book on which it is based

Conan the barbarian of the Balkans

THE central character of Capitaine Conan, Bertrand Tavernier's latest film, is a *franc tireur* in the French army that fought in the Balkans shortly before the November 11 armistice brought the first world war to a close. With his band of hardened fighters, most of them Bretons like himself, he acts spectacularly, brutally and efficiently. He is a warrior, not a soldier — as he himself points out.

Based on a little-known episode in the first world war and on the novel Roger Vercel wrote about it, Tavernier's film sets out to point up the contrast between the major offensives, decided upon bureaucratically by the chiefs of staff and carried out with the help of huge human and material resources, and the bold surprise attacks staged by Conan's men.

In both cases there is plenty of blood and killing, but, as the construction of the narrative suggests, it is not the same blood or the same killing. On the one hand, an unjust and absurd massacre is perpetrated to serve some obscure collective interest or to flatter the vanity of those who give orders but do not suffer the consequences; and on the other, the courage, skill and determination of its perpetrators somehow justify the military action that takes place.

Tavernier is not much interested in war heroes — their originality, their actual or symbolic usefulness to their superiors — or the darker sides of those who distinguish themselves in exceptional circumstances. He deliberately resorts to a series of clichés, borrowed mainly from the representation of warriors in the cinema: what he is interested in is not the truth of the real Conan, but his potential as a cinematic hero.

The question of the "hero" is central to the cinema, and particularly so in the case of a director like Tavernier, who works in the best tradition of classical cinema, where it went without saying that you expected to see heroes on the screen.

That heroic strand runs right through Capitaine Conan, though it never takes over the movie completely. And it is a strand which is particularly vivid because of the quite extraordinary density and energy that Philippe Torreton injects into the title role.



Capitaine Courageous . . . Philippe Torreton injects extraordinary density as Conan PHOTO: ETIENNE GEORGE

But Tavernier does not concentrate solely on Conan. He pits him against a man with a very different temperament, Norbert (Samuel Le Bihan), a young intellectual officer with democratic leanings whom Conan has introduced the hard way to the realities of the life in the trenches and the virile friendship of men of action.

Later on in the film, when the war on the western front is over but the not yet demobilised eastern army is still being sent from one Balkan town to another, Norbert acts first as a lawyer, then as a prosecutor at the courts martial that allow high-ranking officers to settle their accounts with their subordinates.

The army's wretched saga ends in gory and totally absurd clashes with Russian and Hungarian revolutionaries, while Conan and Norbert disagree violently over their very different conceptions of honour. But there remains a mutual esteem and, in the end, they become reconciled.

The dramatic mainspring of the film hinges on the interaction between the two men. Conan the archaic, "medieval" warrior — who is mirrored, in more aristocratic form, by De Scève (Bernard Le Coq) — could not be more different from the modern, republican Norbert.

Tavernier the film critic is an authority on the American cinema, and his direction alludes explicitly, and sometimes a trifle self-indulgently, to the great American war films. But his most direct model is a classic Western, John Ford's The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance: we find the same alliance between a paragon of old-fashioned virtues (played by John Wayne in Ford's movie), who is historically doomed to disappear, and a lawyer like Norbert (James Stewart), who embodies new values that are no longer individual but collective, and that are anchored in reason and law.

WITH the benefit of lavish production resources, Tavernier sets out to work these themes into a historical pageant which contains spectacular crowd scenes, huge explosions and a profusion of secondary story lines played out behind the main narrative.

It is here that Capitaine Conan falls short of its ambitions. The overall composition of the film is remarkably unbalanced: the prologue where Tavernier throws his troops into the heat of battle is too long, and we inexplicably lose track of the central character during a whole section of the movie.

Tavernier also gives way to a temptation that has been his pet vice ever since his first period film (Que La Fête Commence, 1975) — a fondness for authentic little anecdotal episodes whose piquancy appeals to his palate, but which slow down the narrative.

There is a cynically offhand general (Claude Rich) and a tearful *grande bourgeoise* (Catherine Rich) who is trying to track down her jailed son. Tavernier orchestrates a spectacular hold-up, evokes fleeting love affairs in occupied Bucharest, and suggests the first stirrings of revolutionary feeling among the troops. He can never resist that extra set piece or quaint detail.

Despite the fascinating subject-matter of Capitaine Conan and a number of successful sequences, Tavernier seems to have bitten off more than he can chew — until the epilogue, that is, which finally ties the film into the one theme which, behind the diversity of narratives and genres that this most nostalgic of directors has treated since his first movie, The Watchmaker Of St Paul (1974), has always been central to his work: the theme of a world that is about to disappear for ever, a world that is at once an era in the history of mankind and an epoch in the cinema.

(October 17)

Dirty war that France forgot

ROGER VERCEL'S book, Capitaine Conan (Prix Goncourt 1934), is not so much a novel as an autobiographical account that pays tribute to the maverick bands of soldiers, many facing charges before a court martial, who were sent to fight a filthy guerrilla war on the eastern front. The conditions they fought under were very different from those made familiar by the traditional imagery of the first world war.

Vercel's book was a kind of literary tombstone erected to men who, although dehumanised to the point where they did not think twice about "mopping up the trenches", played a crucial but often forgotten role in that unspeakable conflict.

Mobilised in 1914 at the age of 20, Vercel experienced trench warfare in Champagne and the Somme before joining the eastern army in 1918.

The battle arena, with its malaria-infested swamps and steep terrain, offered problems not experienced on the western front. The series of reverses which had begun with defeat in the Dardanelles ended only when French, British and Serb troops fought back heroically at Dobropolje in September 1918.

That battle and the assault on Mt Sokol, in Macedonia, resulted in a preliminary armistice which, combined with the surrender of Bulgaria on September 29 and of the Ottoman Empire a day later, persuaded the German Marshal Erich Ludendorff to negotiate the end of fighting on the western front.

But these decisive events were omitted from the legend of the "Great War". And the final eastern armistice concluded on November 13 by General Louis Franchet d'Esperey and Mihali Karolyi was overshadowed by the historic event in Compiègne two days earlier.

That November 11 armistice did not result in troops on the eastern front being demobilised. To ensure that the Entente could control both Hungary and the region of the Danube and Constantinople, the French corps was disbanded, then re-formed as an army of occupation.

It had to wait for treaties defining the new borders to be concluded, then put into effect — a process that took two years. The French army acted cautiously in Romania, where it was posted: the Romanians, allies of the French ever since a "secret treaty" of August 1916, had been guilty, when things were going particularly badly in the Balkans, of having negotiated a separate peace treaty with the Central Powers.

Turned into a band of trigger-happy gendarmes in a region still fraught with tension, the forgotten French army knew it could expect no sympathy back home. Vercel, who is only thinly disguised as Norbert in his book, denounced that reaction: "We were held in utter contempt. We were regarded as useless incompetents and mental defectives! We reminded people of such unpleasant experiences!"

(October 17)

A glimmer of hope in a naughty world

Samuel Blumenfeld reviews a Belgian film full of dark promise

LUC and Jean-Pierre Dardenne's La Promesse (The Promise) stands somewhere between Hergé's comic book Coke En Stock — the movie deals with the problem of illegal labour and modern slavery — and Antonin Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty.

The Dardenne brothers draw up a comprehensive inventory of the less wholesome aspects of human behaviour (sadism, murder, swindling and so on) in a Belgian environment — an inventory which, in accordance with Artaud's credo, leaves neither actor nor spectator intact.

In La Promesse, relations between Roger and his son Igor consist of much more than just fatherly love and filial respect; there are elements of the relationship that ties a slave to his master, or an inventor to his creation.

Every evening, Roger takes a piece of charcoal and draws on Igor's shoulder the same star-like shape that is tattooed on his body too, as if trying to engrave a mark of eternal allegiance on his son.

Although he is only 15, Igor must help his father in his dastardly exploitation of illegal immigrants. Roger contributes to their fares from Africa or from the former Yugoslavia, then forces them to pay an extortionate rent for microscopic lodgings in return for a job that often never materialises. With his ill-gotten gains he hopes to buy the house he lives in with Igor.

Igor's behaviour is inscrutable. It is impossible to decide if he feels any pity when he steals an old lady's purse or conscientiously goes round collecting the immigrants' rent. It is equally difficult to sense whether he feels hatred when Roger beats him till he bleeds or orders him to quit the garage where he works as an apprentice. There is just a flicker of a frown when his father decides to let one of his workers die rather than risk taking him to hospital.

It is because the Dardenne brothers' attitude to Igor is totally shorn of any sentimentality that his psychological motivations seem inexplicable — there seems to be no rhyme or reason, for example, in his decision to go off with the widow of the African worker who died on his father's building site. The mystery surrounding Igor is wonderfully set off by his smile, which reveals a row of crooked and very rotten teeth whose discoloration he attempts to mask with liquid Tippex.

La Promesse, which is set in the area between Liège and Seraing that has been devastated by unemployment and industrial decline, is at first sight a realistic film. Yet the many locations used — which include a tacky bar, a semi-derelict building with a clapped-out sewerage system and a restaurant where father and son celebrate their unholy alliance in the company of two floozies — are fleetingly suggested rather than described. Their extreme anonymity seems somehow to reflect Igor's conscience.

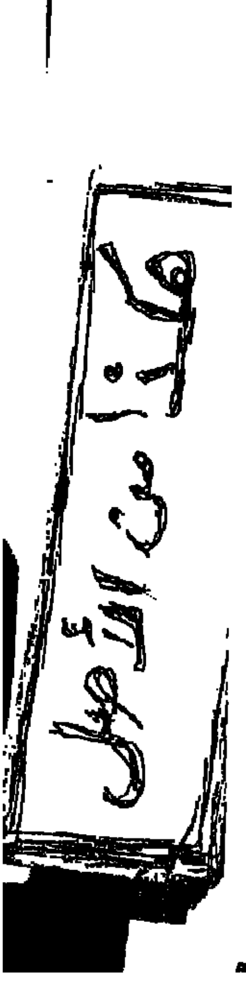
La Promesse is above all an extremely weird film. If it fails to come out in favour either of Igor's innocence or of his moral corruption, it is because he belongs to a world where notions such as good and evil no longer have meaning, where all feelings of solidarity have completely vanished and it is a case of each man for himself, where fiddlers and predators like his father Roger call the tune.

Even so, La Promesse does hint at the possibility of something else: as Igor gradually eases himself from his father's steely grip, there is just a glimmer of hope that he will one day turn into a human being.

(October 17)

Le Monde

Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani



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The Washington Post

No Clear Victor Emerges on Capitol Hill

ELECTION COMMENT
David S. Broder

MOST elections confer power. This one divided it. None of the victors tried to claim a mandate — and a good thing too. Despite Ross Perot's drawing only half the votes he siphoned off in 1992, President Clinton apparently fell short of his goal of being re-elected by a majority. And Republicans, while still in control on Capitol Hill, have fewer seats in Congress than they held the last two years.

Even in a time of economic optimism, after four years of healthy growth, most voters were not willing to give either party or any leader in either of the elected branches an unmistakable signal to take charge. You can call it a cop-out, a sign that the dismayingly small portion of the population who went to the polls said, "It's too complicated for us. You politicians figure out what to do next." I prefer to think that a skeptical electorate simply wasn't convinced by anyone's performance or rhetoric that there are easy answers for the challenges of post-Cold War America.

The election leaves authority in Washington divided among four elected officials. The two who seem strongest may well be the shakiest, which makes the role of the other two even more fascinating.

Clinton, that consummate politician, has done what no Democrat since FDR has managed by winning consecutive presidential elections. He ran a superb campaign after engineering an even more remarkable recovery from his virtual repudiation in 1994.

But second terms historically have been less than productive, and Clinton faces several unusual handicaps. He is the first Democratic president ever to be elected with an opposition-controlled Congress — a Congress which will hold him to his pledge to have a balanced budget within reach by the end of his term. So he will be operating with both fiscal and political constraints. He badly needs to restaff and rehabilitate the White House and Cabinet, suffering from exhaustion and, in too many cases, ethical taints. And he faces a sea of legal troubles, mainly from the soon-to-accelerate work of Whitewater special counsel Kenneth Starr, but also from the court case alleging sexual harassment and from the wave of investigations congressional Republicans promise to unleash.

If he chose to, Clinton could commiserate with Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, R-Georgia, the second of the badly wounded winners in last week's voting. Gingrich is in line to be the first Republican in almost seven decades to preside over successive Congresses. But his position is shakier than Clinton's. The exit polls showed that twice as many voters disapprove of his performance as commend it. I think Gingrich is capable of refashioning his approach to his job and becoming a more effective, if less visible, leader of the House.

But it is not a safe bet that he will have the chance. The House ethics committee investigation of financial matters involved in the welter of supportive organizations Gingrich formed on his way to the top has taken a very serious turn, from all I can learn, and the omens from the election were not encouraging. House Minority Whip David Bonior, D-Michigan, Gingrich's chief accuser, survived a purge attempt engineered by Gingrich's ally, Michigan Gov. John Engler (R), in large part by describing it as a Gingrich-inspired coup.

And the chairman of the ethics panel, the estimable Rep. Nancy Johnson, R-Connecticut, had a very close call from a challenger who accused her of being too protective of Gingrich. Those signals have been seen by House members of both parties, and especially by Republicans, who must calculate how far they will go to save the speaker's hide.

That leaves two other power-sharers, whose influence almost certainly will grow. One is Vice President Al Gore, the man-in-waiting for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2000. His clout in the White House is already considerable and can only increase.

And the other, least known to the public, is Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Mississippi, now out from under the shadow of Bob Dole and free to exercise his considerable skills both inside the Senate and on the television talk-show stage. Lott leads an enlarged Senate GOP majority — one in which Southerners and fellow conservatives will play an even bigger role. He is aiming for a filibuster-proof, 60-vote majority in 1998, which would allow the GOP to press its own agenda in the final two years of Clinton's term. But in the meantime, he may well be the most cunning adversary the Democrats face.



U.S to Aid Opposition To Sudan

David B. Ottaway

THE U.S. government is about to send military aid to three African countries collaborating to help overthrow the militant Islamic regime in Sudan, regarded in Washington as a key sponsor of international terrorism, according to Clinton administration and congressional officials.

Nearly $20 million in surplus U.S. military equipment will be sent to Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda, the officials said, adding that the three countries support Sudanese opposition groups preparing a joint offensive to topple the Khartoum government. The officials said all of the military aid is non-lethal and defensive, and includes radios, uniforms, boots and tents. But congressional and Pentagon sources said this could be expanded to include rifles and other weapons.

U.S. officials also deny that the equipment is specifically earmarked for the Sudanese rebels, despite the declared anti-Khartoum policies of the recipient governments. "We are assisting these governments in their own defense. Nothing we are giving them is to be used for any other purpose," said George E. Moose, assistant secretary of state for African affairs.

But congressional sources and several African affairs experts expressed skepticism that the equipment will be kept from rebel ranks. Much of the aid consists of basic items suitable for outfitting a guerrilla force, these sources noted.

The decision to provide military aid to the three African nations reflects growing administration anger at Sudan, which the White House considers second only to Iran as a staging ground for international terrorism and for Islamic extremists involved in subverting neighboring, pro-U.S. governments.

Administration officials said no formal Presidential Decision Directive was issued by the White House spelling out a new strategy toward Sudan. Under U.S. law, any operation intended to subvert a foreign government must be preceded by a presidential "finding." It is unclear whether such a measure has been invoked in this case.

But top administration officials met several times over the last year to discuss policy toward Sudan's militant Islamic rulers, and the officials made "a very deliberate policy decision" to adopt a tougher line, according to one senior administration official. President Clinton was involved in some of these discussions, the official added.

The administration's attitude toward Sudan hardened after evidence emerged of its support for the attempted assassination of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June 1995. Washington sought, and obtained in April, a U.N. resolution condemning Sudan for its involvement. Mild diplomatic sanctions were imposed.

But the administration concluded earlier this fall that Sudan was taking only "tactical" and "cosmetic" steps to end support for terrorism in order to avoid further U.N. sanctions, officials said.

Clinton Denies DNC Funds Had Influence

John F. Harris

PRESIDENT Clinton last week "categorically" denied that anyone linked to an Indonesian financial conglomerate has won improper influence with his administration because of their contributions to the Democratic National Committee. But he said the controversy over party fund-raising has created a "unique moment of opportunity" for a quick agreement with Republicans on reforming campaign finance laws.

"Absolutely not," Clinton answered, when asked if associates of the Jakarta-based Lippo Group had influenced administration policy. Clinton said that he has taken a tougher line against Indonesian human rights abuses than his predecessors.

At his first extended meeting with reporters since his reelection, Clinton also announced he has chosen Erskine Bowles, a North Carolina millionaire with a reputation for "brilliant business success and dedicated public service," to replace the departing Leon E. Panetta as White House chief of staff.

Bowles, who was deputy chief of staff before leaving the White House a year ago, accepted the job on Thursday last week after extended negotiations in which Clinton persuaded him to take the position.

While some of the news conference was light-hearted, it was dominated by a subject the White House considers anything but a jocular matter. All during the closing weeks of the campaign, Clinton declined to discuss the controversy over Democratic fund-raising, as both White House and Democratic campaign officials provided sparse information, and that only grudgingly.

Clinton praised DNC staff members for admitting, as they did a few days before the election, that its procedures for checking contributions — even those larger than a $100,000 — were too lax, and for vowing to correct the problem.

But he said both national parties were raising large amounts of money this election year, and that in the Democrats' case, checks came from over a million sources. Of those, he said, "quite a small number out of a million, they should not have taken and they have returned them."

Among the contributions the DNC returned was one solicited by John Huang — a former Lippo Group executive, Clinton acquaintance from Little Rock, and Commerce Department appointee — who left his government post to raise money for the party. A $250,000 contribution that Huang solicited turned out to have come from a Korean firm, which is illegal, rather than its U.S. subsidiary. Huang also arranged a fund-raiser hosted by Vice President Gore at a Buddhist temple where one person has said she made a $5,000 donation after being given the money by someone else. The Federal Election Commission is investigating.

For the first time, Clinton publicly explained his relationship with Huang and with James Riady, a principal owner of the Lippo Group who also lived for a time in Little Rock. White House officials have said Clinton has met with both men at the White House, describing the visits primarily as social but acknowledging that issues related to Asia — including the trade status of China, where the Lippo Group has large interests — came up.

Clinton said he got to know the men in Arkansas "primarily in the context of my work as governor," and that he had "a personal relationship with them that went back several years." But he said his White House meetings were nothing unusual. "All kinds of people talk to me about policy," Clinton said. "Polish Americans, Hungarian Americans, Jewish Americans, Irish Americans talk to me about policy."

On Indonesian policy, outside experts say Clinton largely has continued the Bush administration policy of putting trade at the center of the relationship, and in 1994 refused to impose trade sanctions over Indonesia's poor treatment of workers. But Clinton disputed that Indonesian business interests like the Lippo Group are driving policy.

"We changed our policy on arms sales because of East Timor, not to sell small arms," Clinton said, referring to a former Portuguese colony brutally suppressed by Indonesia. "And we cosponsored the resolution in the United Nations in favor of greater human rights for East Timor. And I'm proud that we did that. So I can tell you categorically that there was no influence."

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Boot Camp at the Shoe Factory

Anita Chan in Dongguan City finds Taiwanese bosses drilling Chinese workers to make sneakers for Americans

IF YOU doubt that many Asians think business is a lot like war, consider a gigantic shoe factory in one of south China's busiest industrial zones. Here, where athletic shoes for Americans are assembled by young Chinese peasant women supervised by Taiwanese bosses, the myth of the Confucian ideal of worker-management harmony has been overtaken by a model straight out of the military textbooks.

One evening this summer, I watched as two platoons of workers were marching in a flood-lit courtyard and shouting in unison, "Be respectful toward my work! Be loyal! Be creative! Be of service!" Behind them forklifts were weaving back and forth between buildings, as production continued round the clock.

The enterprise, called Yu Yuan, is not exactly a sweatshop — the pay is relatively decent and living conditions are adequate compared to other nearby Taiwanese-owned factories, though the hours are very long. Yu Yuan, which produces 10 brands of shoes including Nike and Reebok, may simply be the reality of the next phase of the Asian "economic miracle": giant factories in places like China and Vietnam, built with off-shore Asian capital, staffed with the rural poor and managed with ruthless efficiency to gain maximum competitive advantage.

Popular wisdom has it that the success of overseas Chinese and Korean businesses can be traced to a Confucian culture in which mutual trust, flexibility and interpersonal relationships predominate. What is taking place in many of these factories in China that are run by Taiwanese and Koreans is incompatible with that image. What prompts the chairman of the Taiwanese Business Association in Dongguan to order his security guards to salute and snap to attention every time he passes through the factory gate? Not Confucian beliefs, but a hankering for modern army standards of discipline and unquestioning loyalty.

In Taiwan and South Korea, all young men have to undergo military training, and until recently an unusually rigid discipline was instilled by regimes that considered themselves besieged. It is an experience shared by almost all of the Taiwanese and Korean managers now working in China. In some Taiwan-owned factories the owners fly in retired army officers to impose a similar martinet discipline on both mainland workers and Taiwanese staff.

One evening I stood outside the gates of a newly opened factory in Dongguan. Any new factory holds out the possibility of higher pay and better conditions, so at 6pm, a few dozen young migrant workers, all of them speaking in the accents of poorer regions of China, waited eagerly at the factory gate for security guards to let them in to take the recruitment test.

There is the normal check on IDs, education certificates and statements from their hometown government attesting they are unmarried. What is new at this particular factory is that the female applicants are ordered to stand at attention as if they are applying to join the army, are told to run a mile and then to do as many push-ups as they can within a minute.

The young women emerging from the gate are suspicious. The more experienced workers know that screening for strength and stamina and military-style obedience portends nights of enforced overtime in a shoe industry already notorious for its long work hours. They'd better stick to the jobs they've got, several told me. Leave this new factory to the green migrant workers. The Taiwanese are the largest investors in Dongguan City and, second only to Hong Kong, the major foreign investors in China, having poured more than $20 billion into the mainland during the past decade. With labor costs rising in Taiwan, they have moved labor-intensive industries such as shoe manufacture into China lock, stock and barrel. China today pro-

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A Chinese poster from the days of the Cultural Revolution

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Shoe Factory

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duces almost half the world's shoes, along with a vast array of garments, household gadgets and electrical appliances that not long ago were assembled in Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea.

A decade and a half ago, Dongguan City was a small sleepy rural town set amid rice fields not far from Hong Kong. Today, the entire county has been engulfed by frenetic industrial activity. The rice fields surrounding Dongguan have been transformed into seemingly endless concrete industrial estates. Whole clan villages live off the rents of the factory buildings that have displaced their fields. The local people can afford not to work in these factories. They leave this to the many tens of thousands of migrants from poorer parts of China who have taken up temporary residence here, filling the dormitories that have been thrown up alongside the factories.

The wages the factories are offering have not been keeping up with inflation, and many rural Chinese have decided the money's not enough to make the long trip from the provinces worthwhile. The golden age of inexhaustible cheap labor may be drawing to an end, and the Taiwanese businessmen are beginning to talk about moving their manufacturing equipment onward to Vietnam rather than raise wages.

In the meantime, they have instituted harshly regimented labor conditions. They scoff at what they consider the local Hong Kong-owned firms' slack management practices. In interviews around the country, I was told that corporal punishment is common to the management style of many of the factories owned by Taiwanese and Koreans.

Yu Yuan is run in a decidedly military style. New recruits are given three days of "training." The first day, according to one of them, is largely spent marching around the compound, barked at by a drill sergeant.

"The factory management is precise down to the minute," explained a worker who was taking a rest after dinner. "You see those workers waiting outside the gate to go up to the third floor for their dinner? The gate opens at 5:30 sharp. The workers file up the stairs on one side, while those who have finished their dinner descend on the other. When they get to the canteen, they sit eight to a table and wait. Only when the bell rings can they begin to eat. We have 10 to 15 minutes to finish the meal, then we file downstairs again."

The factory compound is perched along a river where the company has built a pleasant promenade flanked by green lawns and dotted with flower beds. It is an unusually quiet and serene spot in a city that resembles a gigantic construction site. But each of the evenings I was there only a few workers were taking advantage of it. They are too busy, I was told.

Some work 12-hour shifts called "long day shifts"; others are on "long night shifts." Often these exceed 12 hours. Much of the work involves sitting at industrial sewing machines and stitching together the various shoe parts. As one of the workers explained, "You work longer if you can't finish the day's allocated quota. Another unpaid extra hour or so is spent in preparation before the shift begins. In addition, because there are long queues, you need to arrive early at the gate so you can punch your card on time, do the drills and then line up to get to your shop floor. You can't afford to be late because there's a penalty equal to half a day's wages."

A LARGE number of other workers are on eight-hour shifts, but they are required to do considerable overtime work. I was there during a slack period and a worker noted that he was putting in only one or two hours of overtime a day, seven days a week, and got one day off every second week. But during a busy period, he said, he had to work his day shift from early morning till 11pm or midnight. The slow workers stay even later. Workers get a bit over 2 yuan an hour (about 25 US cents), which is just above the minimum legal wage. With about 80 hours of overtime work a month, their monthly wages hover around 600-700 yuan ($75-80 a month).

The amount of enforced overtime is in violation of China's labor laws, which stipulate a maximum of 36 hours of overtime work each month. Yet, all things considered, conditions at this city-sized factory are above average for the district. The meals are subsidized, and there is medical care and relatively low-density housing of 10 to a room.

Nevertheless, the factory's turnover rate is a high 7 percent a month, according to one manager I spoke with. Other factories in Dongguan that offer poorer conditions resort to increasingly extreme measures to keep workers from quitting. In violation of China's labor laws, many of them demand a "deposit" of a few hundred yuan (from two weeks' to a month's wages) to ensure workers cannot leave before their contract expires. They also lock up the migrant workers' ID cards, without which they cannot job-hop or even remain in the city.

Yu Yuan does not demand a deposit or hold its workers' ID cards, but those who quit before their contract ends will not receive their last two weeks' pay. This is easy to enforce because there is a two-week time lag in wage payments.

The worst factories in south China do not even allow workers to leave the factory compound after work. The official press has reported cases of unpaid workers enslaved in heavily guarded compounds who have staged escapes. In the worst example that has come to light in this region, a Taiwan-managed joint-venture factory employs more than 100 guards for 2,700 workers, one of whom recently died in an escape attempt.

Some of the Korean-run factories in north China, which is where almost all of Korea's investments are concentrated, are even harsher and more unscrupulous in their treatment of workers. During many months of interviewing in China about factory conditions, officials and business people repeatedly confided to me about Korean employers who resort to beatings, tight military control and public humiliation to cow workers. In one case a woman worker was locked inside a dog cage with a large dog and placed on public display in the factory compound.

Local officials in south China seem sympathetic toward these factories' militaristic approach. Not so long ago under Mao Zedong, the Communist Party leader, the loyal discipline of the People's Liberation Army was upheld for the entire nation to emulate. To a surprising extent, conversations with various government and trade union officials in China reveal that many of these 40-to-50-year-olds had once been junior army officers, assigned to coveted positions when they were demobilized. They, too, see military-like control as a quick fix to the problem of a migrant labor force. The common underlying beliefs that they and the Taiwanese and Korean managers share is not in Confucianism but militarism and authoritarianism.

Some Western commentators suggest that China's industrialization and modernization, spurred by flows of foreign investment and by contacts with the rest of East Asia, will gradually pull China in a more democratic direction. So far, the experience of Dongguan suggests otherwise.

Anita Chan, a sociologist at the Australian National University, has published four books on China.

Angels and Demons

Dennis Drabelle

THE DISCOVERY OF HEAVEN
By Harry Mulisch Translated from the Dutch by Paul Vincent
Viking. 730pp. $34.95

"I NEVER make up anything," claims a novelist-character in this prodigious novel. "I remember. I remember things that have never happened. Just like you do when you read my novel." Much the same might be said of that novelist's creator, Harry Mulisch, a Dutch writer best-known for The Assault, the gripping story of a family shattered by an assassination in front of their house during World War II. The Discovery Of Heaven features angels in heaven, two close male friends who were conceived in Holland on the same charged day (that of the Reichstag fire in 1933), a preternaturally beautiful and intelligent boy, and a quest for the tablets containing the Ten Commandments (not the original tablets, which were destroyed by an angry God, but the replacements). If all this is redolent of magic realism, in Mulisch's low-key telling it's as unobtrusively vivid as a memory of events that never occurred.

Mulisch is the son of a Jewish mother and a Gentile father who was arrested for collaboration with the Nazis after the war. That chilling heritage made itself felt in The Assault and does so again here, where one of the friends, astrophysicist Max Delius, hails from a similar background, with the added horror that his father betrays his wife and her parents, dooming them to Auschwitz; after the war, the father is shot by a firing squad. The other friend, dilettante and (later) politician Onno Quist, is the scion of a stuffy Calvinist family.

Mulisch depicts the brilliant pair's almost scarily intense friendship in evocative images and lively talk. "But their unending stream of theories, jokes, observations, and anecdotes was not their real conversation," he writes; "that took place beneath these, without words, and it was about themselves. Sometimes it became visible in a roundabout way, like when in the past North Sea fishermen located a school of herrings from its silvery reflection against the clouds."

Soon a third party complicates their bachelorhoods: Ada, a cellist. After a brief affair with Max, she marries Onno. One day, in a mad interlude, she and Max have sex again. Since she makes love with Onno just hours later, her pregnancy might be impeccable; then again, it might not — she wonders if she isn't "pregnant by the friendship" between Max and Onno. After she is knocked into a coma in a car accident (the doing of an interfering angel), the question mark goes into abeyance.

The child is born — the extraordinary Quinten — but Ada never wakes up. Onno and Max agree that Max will raise the boy with the help of Ada's mother, with whom he lives (and carries on an affair) in a rural castle converted into rental units. Not until Quinten is almost grown up will his two putative fathers sort out his parenthood. It's not giving much away to reveal that the angel so arranges things that Quinten gets Max's genes, benefits from Max's fatherhood up to a certain point (and, incidentally, acquires a battery of James-Bondish skills — lock-picking, for one — from the castle's other tenants), and then, after Max dies, goes to live with Onno as the time for Commandment-hunting draws near.

Mulisch's plot is baroque and tantalizing, and the climactic episode of Quinten and Onno on the trail of the missing tablets recalls both Umberto Eco and Steven Spielberg. But it's Max and Onno's speculations — soaring and pedestrian, cunning and crazy — that give this novel its special flavor.

A long soliloquy of Onno's encompasses such topics as DNA, freedom, Hitler's power, and the selection of a new Dalai Lama in Tibet. Later, Onno sketches for Quinten a theory of anti-Semitism that implicates the very Commandments they are searching for. "I . . . used to think that the hatred of Jews was all about Christ," Onno says, "but that isn't the case. It existed long before Christ . . . [It's based on] the fact that the God of the Jews had sanctified his people by entering into a covenant with them, which no other people can boast. Obviously an intolerable thought for many people."

In the hands of most other writers, matter of this density would likely sink heavily into the page, but Mulisch invests it with a quite bearable lightness. Paul Vincent's translation seems solid, if occasionally awkward. If he could just understand that "like" is almost always a preposition, he wouldn't write solecisms such as "now he understood why Max — like he himself, in fact — had had four foster parents."

The standard danger lurking in monster-long novels is loss of control. This is not a problem for Mulisch. If anything, The Discovery of Heaven might be wound a bit too tight, with the hand of the watchmaker-author occasionally visible, especially when those angels are on stage. But with or without them, this is one of the most entertaining and profound philosophical novels ever written.

Dante on Board the Starship Enterprise

David Damrosch

THE OPENING OF THE AMERICAN MIND: Canons, Culture, and History
By Lawrence W. Levine
Beacon. 202pp. $20

GREAT BOOKS: My Adventures with Homer, Rousseau, Woolf, and Other Indestructible Writers of the Western World
By David Denby
Simon & Schuster. 468pp. $30

AT THE age of 15, seeking some comic reading, I bought a copy of Dante. I soon discovered that The Divine Comedy wasn't quite the barrel of laughs its title had led me to expect, but I was hooked. I worked my way through the whole poem, in between episodes of Star Trek, moved by the design and drama of Dante's world and sustained through the slower cantos by a sense of cultural merit that I didn't think I was acquiring by watching TV.

The value of such European cultural capital has come under increasing question in recent years, as campuses have become more socially and racially diverse. Dante now shares the catalogue with Captain Kirk. A decade ago, Allan Bloom's Closing Of The American Mind attacked such changes, inaugurating a string of defenses of European great books as the best basis for fostering intellect and social unity in our multicultural, mass-culture society. In very different ways, Lawrence W. Levine and David Denby seek to change this debate.

In The Opening Of The American Mind, Levine offers a heartfelt defense of the progressive developments in contemporary higher education. Levine argues forcefully that critics of these new trends are simply wrong to claim that there ever was a stable canon of timeless great works. With a wealth of telling quotations, he shows that the great-books curricula celebrated by Allan (and now by Harold) Bloom were only created early in this century, to form immigrants' children in the mold of a specific and highly political image of American culture. This trend continued with the rise of American studies, long marginalized, then institutionalized after World War II as the study of white America. Now the old melting-pot analogy is being superseded by a new valuing of ethnic diversity, and Levine argues eloquently that this diversity needs to be studied and taught, for the United States is above all "a society which is constantly emerging, with an identity and a culture which are never permanently fixed."

Levine's account is elegant, passionate and a pleasure to read, offering a welcome historical depth. At the same time, his sensitivity to diversity seems to recede when he discusses the recent critics of academia, whose views he usually characterizes in unified terms. Not all his opponents actually hope that a great-books curriculum will promote the traditional virtues of American culture. Allan Bloom, for one, argued that the old European masterworks should be studied precisely for their differences from mainstream American values.

In Great Books, David Denby presents himself at age 48 as a successful film critic no longer comfortable with his midlife comfort. He returns to his alma mater, Columbia University, to probe the current debate and his own spiritual state by spending a year reading the great books. Retaking the core-curriculum seminars he'd taken 30 years before, he discovers, as early as The Iliad, the radical foreignness of most of the books on the Literature Humanities and Contemporary Civilization syllabi. Yet he struggles to come to terms with these thorny and enigmatic texts, and he dramatizes this process for us.

Denby provides lively accounts of classroom dynamics, as well as interpretive meditations on many of the books and memories and anecdotes from his own life, all the while seeking the continuities beneath the surface distances between one text and the next, himself and the 18-year-olds around the table, himself now and as an adolescent.

Denby argues against the conservative view that the European masterpieces reinforce mainstream values, and he argues even more strongly against leftist critiques of the syllabus. All that matters is the individual's naked encounter with the voice of the text. The point of these texts, for him, is not to represent any social group but to become the vehicle for self-questioning and self-discovery.

In his highly personalized confrontation with the great books, Denby celebrates both the great teachers and the great characters who probe accepted values and achieve a distance from their own cultures, and he stays cool toward authors — notably Dante — who set their characters within a fixed and unquestioned frame. All the same, Denby's great books foster a pronounced Americanism, neither the melting-pot of a Bennett nor the rainbow coalition of a Levine but "the American impulse to annihilate myself and be reborn."

Levine's campus is a community, preparing its members to participate in society; Denby's campus is a classroom, where teachers help individuals to gain a thoughtful and ironic distance from the media-saturated culture around them. Yet Levine and Denby could learn from one another. Levine could complicate his simple view of the campus as a mirror of society: As Denby recognizes, our campuses provide a crucial space of distance from society at large. Denby, in turn, would do well to modulate his ardor for the great individual — book or teacher — and attend more fully to the collaborative enterprise of social life: Groups of many sorts mediate the lonely struggle of Individual against Society, even as Dante takes his place among the multicultural crew of the Starship Enterprise.

Paperbacks

Non-Fiction

V Is for Vampire: An A to Z Guide to Everything Undead, by David J. Skal (Plume, $15.95)

A GOOD half-century before Bram Stoker published Dracula (1987), vampires were already stalking the popular imagination in novels like the 1847 penny dreadful Varney The Vampyre, or The Feast Of Blood by James Malcolm Rymer. Rymer's novel (in which an anti-hero, Lord Francis Verney, spends 850 pages feasting on the blood of virtuous maidens before throwing himself into the mouth of Mount Vesuvius, "tired and disgusted with a life of horror") gets its due in this compendium of vampire lore. Also included are Stoker's famous novel and the vampire tales of Anne Rice, among other literary treatments, and vampire movies from F. W. Murnau's Nosferatu (1922) to Robert Rodriguez's bloodfeast From Dusk Til Dawn. Other entries include "Aconite" (also known as wolfsbane, an herb rumored to have vampire-repellant properties) and "Stake, wooden" ("the classic instrument for destroying vampires").

The Motorcycle Diaries: A Journey Around South America, by Ernesto Che Guevara (Verso, $11)

IN 1951, when future revolutionary leader Che Guevara was a 23 year-old medical student, he set off with a friend on a motorcycle tour through South America. Their itinerary took them the length of the continent, from Cordoba, Argentina (December 1951) to Caracas, Venezuela (July 1952). This book records a young man's physical and psychological journey: "This isn't a tale of derring-do, nor is it merely some kind of 'cynical account'; it isn't meant to be, at least . . . In nine months a man can think a lot of thoughts, from the height of philosophical conjecture to the most abject longing for a bowl of soup — in perfect harmony with the state of his stomach." There's a Jack Kerouac/James Dean edge to much of this travelogue — imagine Che Guevara in a leather jacket — mingled with an increasing political awareness that foreshadows the writer's later revolutionary career.

A Civil Action, by Jonathan Harr (Vintage, $13)

THIS true story of a complex trial underscores the difference between knowing something to a moral certainty and proving it to the satisfaction of the legal system. The case centered on a cluster of leukemia cases — far beyond the statistical average — in the town of Woburn, Massachusetts, where two local plants had been known to dump toxic chemicals. When the families of the dead and dying (many of them children) brought a class action against the plant's parent companies, they chose as their lawyer Jan Schlichtmann, a dogged, almost obsessive attorney with so much drive and indignation that he found it hard to compromise. On the other side were arrayed attorneys who looked down on Schlichtmann because of his parvenu Jewish background and a judge who frequently gave the appearance of siding unfairly with these "paragons" and thus only compounded the difficulty of Schlichtmann's task. The book won the National Book Critics Circle's 1995 award for non-fict

Class divisions on the Continent

Expensive tuition fees at British schools abroad can deter parents from relocating. **Peter Kingston** outlines plans to introduce a system based on the Assisted Places Scheme to provide independent education for families on low incomes

FOR the first time in living memory if not ever, education seems to be the hottest issue among the parties in the run-up to Britain's forthcoming general election.

Ironically, the biggest winners from the last Education Bill before polling day may well be parents leaving the country and educating their children abroad.

For years, a group of British schools situated in continental Europe and educating expatriate workers' children has vainly been trying to persuade successive governments to subsidise their pupils' fees.

Unlike the French and German governments, which gives substantial support to schools educating their nationals' children overseas, the British government provides no monetary help.

But now that an election looms and the political parties are fighting for expatriate votes, this might be about to change.

COBISEC, the Council of British Independent Schools In The European Community, is hopeful it has cross-party support to amend the new Education Bill to include proposals for a system similar to the current Assisted Places Scheme (APS) operating in the UK. This helps parents on low incomes send children to independent schools.

According to COBISEC, which represents 20 British schools, parents going to work in European Union countries increasingly need financial help as the numbers of employers prepared to pay school fees progressively dwindles.

Few but the biggest companies are now giving adequate help with the cost of education, it seems. "More people are now being sent out to work on local contracts with no special provision even though they are working for international companies," said Martin Honour, principal of the British School of Paris.

The upshot, COBISEC suspects, is that growing numbers of people are either turning down opportunities of working abroad or putting their children into the local schools in whichever countries they are going to.

In many of the latter cases, the children's education suffer, according to Sir Dick Pantlin, who founded the British School of Brussels and set up COBISEC.

Most employees posted overseas go for three- or four-year tours. These are not long enough for children to be satisfactorily placed in local non-British schools, he said. Younger children may well settle in reasonably quickly with the language but they face a second major disruption when they return to the UK and the national curriculum.

At secondary age, especially for youngsters approaching GCSEs or A levels, the experience can be disastrous, he said. "Parents usually don't speak the language when they go out and so they can't even offer any help with children's homework."

Fees at the British schools overseas can be hefty, even though they are mainly day schools often on a par with the more expensive UK boarding schools. Many pride themselves on being non-selective.

"We have an open entry. We will take anybody who wants a British style of education and can benefit from it," said Martin Honour. The caveat about "benefits" gives the school discretion to turn down the rare application by a youngster who would not cope with the national curriculum taught in English. In practice, all British applicants are accepted provided they can afford the fees, which go up to £9,000 a year in the upper sixth.

"Non-selective educationally but highly selective financially" is Sir Dick Pantlin's description of the system in the British schools which, despite not selecting their intakes, can boast impressive exam results.

The Paris school, situated in the western suburb of Croissy sur Seine, claims a 95 per cent A level pass rate with most students going to universities of first choice. "In one recent A level league table we were on a level with places like Millfield — pretty good going for a non-selective school," said Mr Honour.

About 70 per cent of its 630 boys and girls, ranging in age from four to 18, are British, 20 per cent are from Commonwealth countries and the rest from anywhere else in the world.

Apart from the full national curriculum, the school offers the typical extra-curricular range of any good British school, including lashings of sport. This month, for instance, the soccer team is playing in Geneva, the girls' hockey team is playing in The Hague, and a mixed squad of athletes is taking part in a cross-country competition in Brussels.

At St George's School in Rome, which occupies a former seminary on The Via Cassio site in the north-west of the city, cricket has just been restored by the principal, Brigid Gardner, even though only 15 per cent of the 600 boys and girls, whose ages range from three to 18, are British. Thirty per cent are Italian and the rest come from 64 countries. "I'm not particularly a cricket fan myself, but it's very English, and if Italians come to an English school they want it to be pukka," said Mrs Gardner.

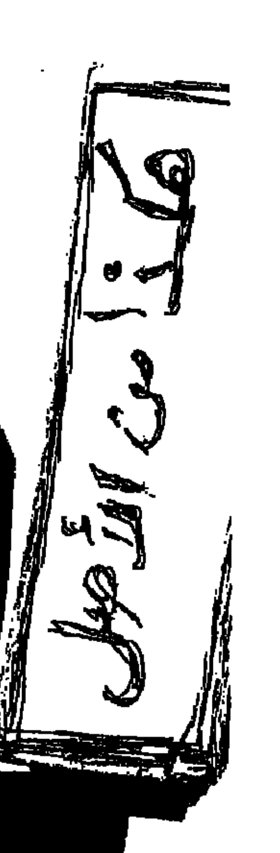
DESPITE being at a financial disadvantage to schools which enjoy government subsidies — her fees approach £8,000 a year in the upper sixth — the school continues to attract large numbers of non-British parents. "I think we offer the best education of any of the international schools in Rome," said Mrs Gardner. Three out of four students go on to British universities, although many parents might originally have considered higher education in the United States, because of their experience at St George's. "We are making a significant contribution to British exports as everybody but the British government knows," said Mrs Gardner. "I should like the Government to give a grant for every child in the school with a British passport, or parent with a British passport."

Jennifer Bray, principal of the British School of Brussels with 950 pupils, echoes her views. Fees range from £4,000 a year for three-year-olds to twice that in the upper sixth. British pupils make up 65 per cent of the roll.

"For most British people coming to Brussels, the money, if any, provided by their companies for education won't cover our fees," said Mrs Bray. The school pursues not only GCSEs and A levels, but advanced GNVQs. Its nearest equivalent in British terms, she said, would have been an old direct grant grammar school. It is far removed in methodology and approach from anything in the Belgium system.

The closest COBISEC has got to success was when the 1988 Education Reform Act was going through Parliament, said Sir Dick. An amendment to create an assisted places scheme was carried in the Lords but knocked out in the Commons on the instructions of the then education secretary, Kenneth Baker. "He said it was too complex."

A real complication this time is that Labour is pledged to scrap the existing domestic APS. With the air of a man who has perhaps sorted out that problem but cannot disclose details, Sir Dick said the COBISEC proposal differs radically from the current set-up: it would be universal and not restricted to the academically gifted child, and it would apply to all ages, not just secondary school children. Unless the Government organises some sort of assistance, more and more employees in smaller companies and people running their own businesses are likely to turn down the option of expanding their operations overseas. In the end, said Sir Dick, that cannot be good for Britain.



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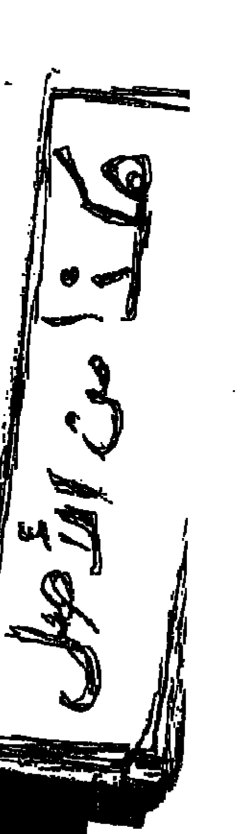
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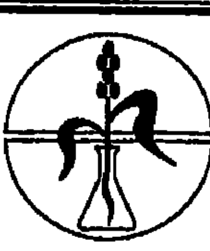
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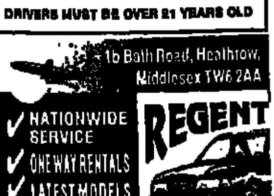
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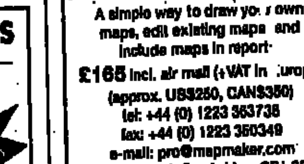
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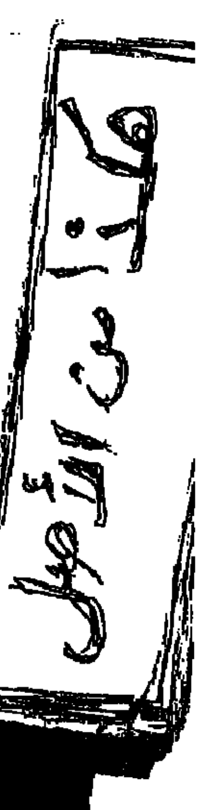
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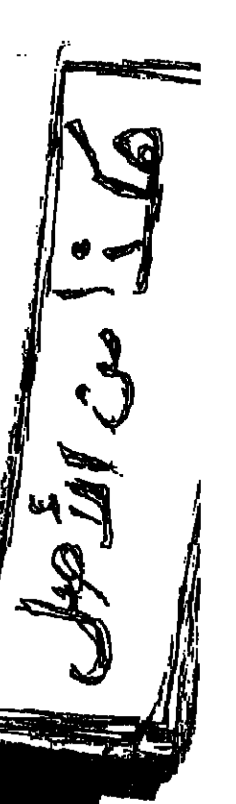
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Tide of change

Mark Cocker

IT FIRST began on the evening of January 31, 1953, and was so completely without warning that when a woman rang to say the sea was in her back kitchen, the police initially thought she had gone mad. Then the insanity really started. Within hours, a monstrous tide surged in along England's east coast, killing more than 300 people and forcing 30,000 to be evacuated. The flood was the biggest disaster in Britain since the Blitz, and much of the damage was inflicted on Norfolk.

However, as I wandered around Cley, one of the villages most seriously affected, except for a white line above eye-level indicating the tide's highest point, there is nothing to record the tumultuous events of that fateful night. In fact, if you look out across Cley's hinterland of quietly razing cattle, the swaying beds of reed and the sails of pleasure boats threading the tidal creeks, there is little to challenge the impression of a mild, generous sea bestowing only economic and aesthetic gifts on the village.

Cley's history also tends to support that view. During the late Middle Ages, it was a prosperous regional port and even today the area retains a valuable inshore fishery. Almost paradoxically, the sea also bestowed new land on Cley, gradually washing up the silts that formed a coastal hem of saltmarsh.

From the 17th century onwards these marshes were embanked and reclaimed as additional pasture. Then in 1926 another important development occurred. About 160 hectares were bought by a group of pioneering conservationists and Cley Marshes nature reserve was born. The new owners formed a managing body, known today as the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, and, following their lead, environmentalists across Britain established similar organisations that eventually came together in a partnership called the Royal Society for Nature Conservation.

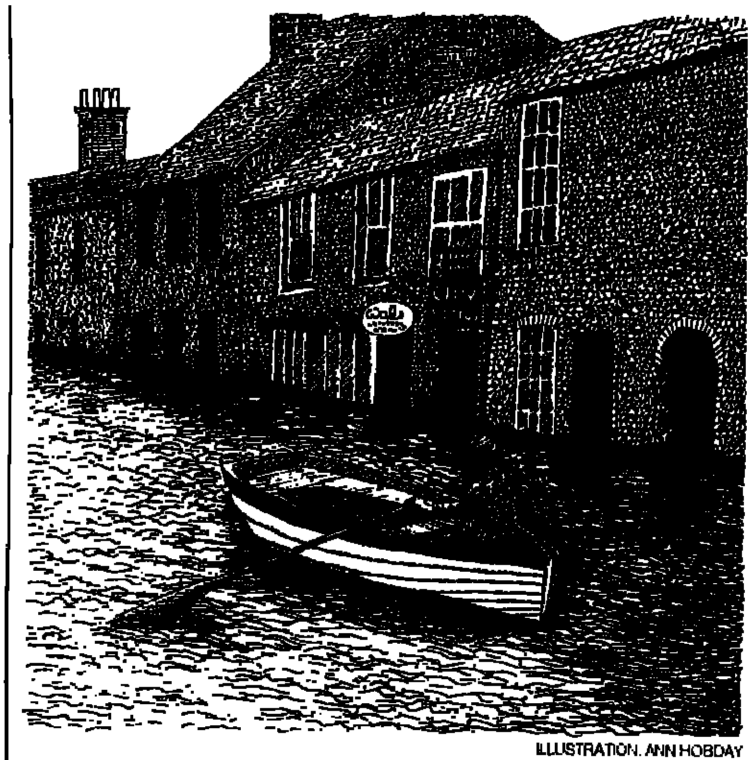


ILLUSTRATION: ANN HOBDAY

Cley Marshes were a seed for this nationwide process, but throughout the growth of environmental interest in Britain they retained an almost unchallenged pre-eminence, particularly for ornithologists. An annual total of 100,000 visitors from all over the world is their collective statement about Cley's importance, especially for breeding wetland birds and wintering wildfowl.

All this, in a sense, was bestowed by the sea. Now, unfortunately, it seems to want to reclaim its gift. Earlier this year Cley experienced a more localised but devastating flood that swamped the reserve in 5 metres of water, ruined this year's breeding season and landed the owners with a $75,000 repair bill.

Being such a low-lying landscape Cley has always been vulnerable to tidal incursion. However, it's now widely thought that the measures pursued by the Environment Agency to protect the coast have only exacerbated the problem. Their principal method has been to bulldoze the beach's broad, convex hump of shingle into a narrower and steeper-sided pyramid, a profile all the more vulnerable to erosion when the storms strike.

With responsibility for a further 1,500 kilometres of coastline and faced with a finite budget and the possibility of rising sea levels from global warming, the Environment Agency has looked on Cley reserve as a relatively low priority, advocating a *laissez-faire* policy euphemistically defined as a "managed retreat".

However, for the owners of one of Britain's premier nature reserves "managed retreat" is hardly satisfactory, and they are looking for defence measures that reflect Cley's cultural and environmental importance. The current predicament is thus developing into more than a simple contest of the elements — land and sea. It will be a critical test of the value accorded nature by policy makers in the 21st century Britain. Which of these forces will prevail can only be determined by the storms ahead.

Chess Leonard Barden

LOSING a first-round brilliancy, then recording the performance of your life is a rare mix, but Andrew Ledger achieved it at last month's Monarch Assurance-Isle of Man Open. The 27-year-old Bedford IM recovered from his mauling to beat four GMs in a row, finished runner-up to the top seed Tkachiev, and recorded his own first GM norm. The £10,000 annual IoM international, now in its seventh year, already ranks next to Hastings and the BCF congress on the UK calendar.

Ledger-Hodgson

1 c4 b6 2 Nc3 e6 3 Nf3 Bb7 4 e4 Bb4 5 Qb3?! 5 Qc2 is safer, avoiding tactical strikes against the queen. **Na6 6 d3 f5 7 exf5 Bxf3 8 gxf3 Qe7 9 Kd1** Was Hodgson bluffing? 9 fxe6 has been suggested but Nc5! 10 Qxb4 Nxd3+ 11 Bxd3 Qxb4 12 exd7+ Kxd7 13 Bf5+ Ke8! looks insufficient compensation for a queen.

Bxc3 10 Qxc3 exf5 11 Bh3 0-0-0 12 Bxf5 Qf7 13 Be4 Nf6 14 Be3 d5 15 cxd5 Nxd5 16 Qa3 White loses the thread. 16 Qb3 or earlier 14 Bg5 is better. **Nab4 17 Qxa7 Rhe8 18 Qa8+ Kd7 19 Qa4+ Ke7 20 Ke2 Kf8 21 Rhg1 Nxd3! 22 Kxd3?** Misplaced bravado; he could still fight for a draw by 22 Bxd3 Nf4+ 23 Kf1. **Nb4+ 23 Kc3 Rxe4 24 fxe4 Rd3+! 25 Kxb4 Qe7+ 26 Kb5 Qe8+ 27 Kc4 Qxe4+ 28 Kb5 Rd5+ 29 Kc6 Rc5+ 30 Kd7 Qe8 mate.**

Who is the world's most promising teenager? Most experts would select Hungary's Peter Leko, aged 17, who already competes in super-GM events and declares he will be champion by 1999. But a few weeks ago France's Etienne Bacrot, aged 13, produced a stunning result when he crushed ex-world champion Vassily Smyslov 5-1 in a match. Smyslov may be 75, yet he plays to a high level and this rout is his first real setback in old age.

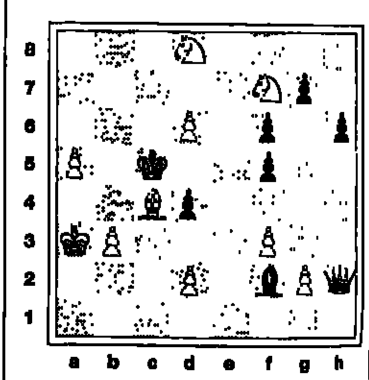
An impressive win against Smyslov's favourite Slav Defence (Bacrot v Smyslov, 6th game).

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 dxc4 5 a4 Na6 6 e3 Bg4 7 Bxc4 e6 8 0-0 Be7 9 Qe2 Nb4 10 Rd1 0-0 11 h3 Bh5 12 a5 Rc8 13 Bb3 c5 14 Nb5 Bxf3 15 gxf3 a6 16 dxc5 Nbd5 17 Nd6 Bxd6 18 cxd6 Qxd6 19 Ra4 Rc5 20 f4 Qc6 21 Bd2 Qb5 22 Qxb5 Rxb5 23 Ra3 Ne4 24 Be1 Ndf6 25 Rc1 Rd8 26 f3 Nd6 27 Rd1 Nfe8 28 Ba4 Rd5 29 Rxd5 exd5 30 Rd3 Nc7 31 Bb4 Ndb5 32 Bc5 f5 33 Bb6 Rd6 34 e4 Kf7 35 e5 Rc6 36 Bxc7 Rc1+ 37 Kf2 Nxc7 38 Rb3 Ne6 39 Rxb7+ Kf8 40 Rb8+ Ke7 41 Rb7+ Rc7 42 Rxc7+ Nxc7 43 Bc6 d4 44 b4 Resigns.

The BCF's new congress director, Tim Wall, scored the quickest win at the recent Coulsdon international, and is close to his own IM title (T Wall v D Gormally).

1 d4 Nf6 2 Bg5 Ne4 3 Bh4 c5 4 f3 g5 5 fxe4 gxh4 6 e3 Bh6 7 Kf2 cxd4 8 exd4 e5 9 Nc3 exd4 10 Qxd4 0-0 11 Qd6 Bg7 12 Nf3 Nc6 13 Nd5 Qa5 14 Bd3 Bxb2 15 e5 Resigns. 16 Qh6 is a decisive threat.

No 2447



White mates in three moves, against any defence (by Dr E Palkoska, 1951).

No 2446: 1 Ne5 (threat 2 Rxc4) Rxe5 2 Qb6, or Rxf6+ 2 Nc6. Traps are 1 Ne1? Rxf6+ or 1 Nc5? Qxe4 or 1 N3xf4? Kxe4 or 1 N3xb4? cxb3.

Quick crossword no. 340

Across

1 Underwear with holes in it! (6,4)
7 More cunning (8)
8 Equipment — changed by motorists (4)
9 Absent (4)
10 Cuddle (7)
12 Eurovision musical competition (4,7)
14 Artful, shrewd (7)
16 Try — to kill with a knife (4)
19 Noise of disapproval — from a snake? (4)
20 Flustered (8)
21 Beneath the waves (10)

Down

1 Middle Eastern republic (5)
2 The chorus — abstain (7)
3 Ingenuous (4)
4 A great number (4,4)
5 Common sweetener (5)
6 Object kept for good luck (6)
11 Set in motion (8)
12 Showing little emotion (6)
13 Pull out (7)
15 Norwegian dramatist (5)
17 One way to play music (2,3)
18 Survey — the scene (4)

Last week's solution

P	E	A	C	E	O	F	F	E	R	I	N	G
I		R		F		E		M		N		E
L	A	C		F	R	E	E	M	A	S	O	N
E		D		I		L		Y		A		E
D	R	E	N	C	H	E	D		A	F	A	R
		T		A		R		V		E		A
D	I	R	E	C	T		N	I	C	K	E	L
I		I		Y		L		C		E		
P	R	O	D		F	A	S	T	N	E	S	S
L		M		M		S		O		P		I
O	P	P	R	E	S	S	O	R		I	N	N
M		H		N		I		I		N		U
A	B	E	R	D	E	E	N	A	N	G	U	S

Bridge Zia Mahmood

A N EARLY round of the World Bridge Olympiad featured one of the largest swings ever witnessed in international competition. Here are a couple of opening lead problems for you to tackle — one tricky, one not so difficult.

First of all, suppose that you are West with these cards:

♠87 ♥9865 ♦Q5 ♣Q8542

and this is the bidding:

South	West	North	East
1♦	No	1♥	4♠
No	No	6♦	Dble
No	No	No	

What would you lead? Your partner's double of the slam is the Lightner convention, asking you not to lead a spade but to try some other suit.

Perhaps he is void in hearts — but in that case, why have your opponents not converted to six hearts?

It may be that he has a void in clubs, or possibly he is hoping to cash the ace and king of that suit, if you lead one. Make your choice.

Your second problem comes as East with these cards:

♠QJ109653 ♥None ♦32 ♣AKJ9

after this auction:

South	West	North	East You
1♦	No	1♥	4♠
No	No	6♦	Dble
No	No	6NT!	Dble
No	No	No	

As you may have gathered, these two problems occurred on the same deal, but at different tables. This was the full hand:

North
♠A2
♥AQJ732
♦K764
♣7

West
♠87
♥9865
♦Q5
♣Q8542

East
♠QJ109653
♥None
♦32
♣AKJ9

South
♠K4
♥K104
♦AJ1098
♣1063

If on the first problem you chose to lead a club as West, I certainly hope that you picked the queen! After this held the trick, you would be able to give partner his heart ruff for one down.

In fact, as it turned out, the problem was academic, for at the table the actual auction was as follows:

South	West	North	East
1♦	No	1♥	4♠
No	No	6♦	Dble
6♥	No	No	Dble
No	No	R'dble	
No	No	No	

East's double of six hearts was in a fit of rage that the opponents had escaped from the doomed six diamonds. His attempt to cash two clubs was only 50 per cent successful, and he recorded -2,070.

At the other table, the bidding really did take place as shown above. This time, however, the club lead was more effective, and the 1100 penalty meant a swing of no fewer than 22 IMPs!

Letter from Abuja Brian Kennedy

Empty shells beneath the city façade

IT LIES in a plain or a sort of basin. All around are strange sugarloaf hills with brown rock screes peeping through the bush foliage. It rains a lot.

It's hard to know what to call Abuja. It's not really a town — it has no centre, no heart. It would like to be thought a city — even a great city, but it lacks everything that makes a city — busy streets, noisy traffic; in a word, life. It doesn't have names, not real names, for its districts; no Chelsea, no Bronx. Just "Area one", "Area two" and so on.

Five years ago it was a huge construction site. The main contractor was one Julius Berger, and his blue signs with white lettering could be seen everywhere. Bulldozers, graders, mobile cranes, monster cement mixers all milling around making a tremendous din, all bearing Julius Berger's name and all madly working and building — building a vast new capital city for the newly oil-rich country of Nigeria. Thousands of workers toiled in sun and rain in their hard hats with the Berger sign. Buses with the same sign ferried them from site to site and other buses carried their children to Berger schools. There was a Berger hospital.

Now all is changed. The place is silent. Tall cranes dangle their hooks over unfinished buildings, their wire ropes rusting, grass sprouting round their bases. The great mosque is complete, its golden dome gleaming in sunlight after rain. One big church, perhaps a cathedral, is also finished but there is another, a mammoth basilica, abandoned in forlorn skeletal form.

Abuja covers a huge area and its road system was conceived on a proportionate scale with double four-lane highways, underpasses, overpasses, slip roads and roundabouts. But often the multi-lane highway leads nowhere except to its end, where you step from the Tarmac straight into the bush.

Now there is not a Julius Berger sign to be seen, except a little one signalling nothing in particular, stuck in the ground like a farewell kiss beside the triumphal arch which bestrides the road from the airport into town, and which is already getting a jungle-mouldy colour.

ONE WONDERS why everything stopped so suddenly with so many roofless houses, unfinished walls. Why the hundreds of villas, never lived-in, their walled gardens never tilled? Scarcely from lack of money. Nigeria gets about $8 billion a year in oil revenues. Lack of will? Perhaps somebody realised that, as it stands, the urban sprawl that is Abuja serves its purpose if that purpose is to provide a venue for the endless international conferences emerging nations love to host.

Perhaps it's seen as a way of courting legitimacy for the regime, but for whatever reason, host them Nigeria surely does, and with a strange mixture of modern African and old colonial protocol. Visiting delegations are whisked from hotel to conference centre in the regulation African way in six-door Mercedes limousines with posses of BMW-mounted outriders, sirens wailing. In contrast, the guard of honour is strangely old-fashioned and British-inspired. It is a cavalry unit and its members wear scarlet tunics which all seem to be of one size — too big for the slim wearer.

Nigeria, unlike most African countries, also welcomes visiting heads of state with gunfire — the traditional British 21 gun salute. Recently, the president of a turbulent African country, unfamiliar with this usage, but only too accustomed to trouble at home, dived flat on his face on the rostrum when the first gun went off.

The band and the troops are the pretty part of the ceremonies, but the real security is ensured by sinister-looking men posted all around. They look like black plainclothes Gestapo men or tontons macoutes. There's a voodoo feel about them. The composition of their rig has probably not been consciously analysed by its creators, but this is Africa and the black G-men are there to strike fear into the heart. They do not look like benevolent security representatives of a caring democratic society. They are there when the foreign dignitaries arrive and when they depart. What the heads of state of countries with regimes of other sorts make of them is a mystery.

In other ways too, Abuja fails as the capital of a rich developing country: a façade of great prestigious buildings. But it's only that — a façade. The money doesn't filter down. The few Nigerians to be seen around the streets of Abuja are poor, terribly poor. Taxis are broken-down ruins whose drivers scratch miserable fares driving the ordinary citizen around. And this is a rich country.

There are some countries, alas too few — Oman comes to mind as an example — where there has been the will to use the bounty of nature in the form of natural gas or oil to improve the lot of the people, to cement the structure of a real society. It is impossible to look at Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria, and see evidence of that sort of will.

Kyoto buries its past

Andrew Higginc

AT THE end of each rainy season, Japan's ancient capital trumpets its history with parades, prayer and much hyperbole about reverence for tradition from the corporate sponsors of Gion Matsuri, a festival held since 970.

This year's festivities introduced a curious way to celebrate Kyoto's glorious past: labourers moved in to tear down one of the city's finest traditional wooden houses.

A big Japanese developer had bought it for the equivalent of $4 million and wanted to start constructing a multi-storey concrete block. The seller: the head of the Gion festival.

"The chairman of the most traditional festival in Kyoto was busy tearing down his own family home in the middle of celebrations to honour the city's past," said a long-time American resident, Marc Keane, a landscape architect and head of the International Society to Save Kyoto. "This tells you a lot about priorities in this city."

A petition begging municipal authorities to save the house, the home of the Fukami family, achieved nothing.

"There are many buildings like the Fukami residence remaining in Kyoto," responded Minoru Nitta of the city's Department of Cultural Properties. "We wish you to understand that it is very difficult for the city to respond to requests for preservation assistance."

Never mind that the municipal government had itself selected the property for an official book celebrating Kyoto's townhouses, known as "bedrooms of eels" because of their shape, which represent a unique style of architecture based on the uniform measurements of tatami mats.

The failure to rescue the Fukami residence was just another skirmish in a long, mostly fruitless, campaign to slow the advance of the "construction state" — an alliance of builders, politicians and bureaucrats at the core of Japan's post-war economy. The country spends nearly three times as much on construction as the United States, 32 times as much in terms of relative size, according to Japan expert Gavan McCormack.



Brought down to earth . . . Kyoto's business community sees no value in preserving the city's architectural legacy PHOTOGRAPH: D TURNER GIVENS

In Kyoto, a city that for so long epitomised Japanese culture from cuisine to calligraphy, the power of this construction juggernaut seems all the more formidable. It helps explain a puzzle of modern Japan: why, when Japanese aesthetics can turn even supermarket wrapping paper into high art, is the country blighted by ugly buildings?

Taken off the target lists for American bombers during the second world war in deference to its heritage, Kyoto has encountered no such consideration from Japanese developers, particularly in the building frenzy of the 1980s.

A city of 1.4 million and home to some of Japan's leading corporations, including the game manufacturer Nintendo, Kyoto still has 2,000 temples and shrines, countless gardens and three castles. But such assets do not provide jobs, tax revenue or contributions to the campaign funds of local politicians. For this, Kyoto depends on big business. About 35 million tourists visit each year, but they generate only 10 per cent of local income.

"Old buildings don't contribute taxes. There is nothing in old buildings that the present administration sees as valuable," Mr Keane said.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

CAN ventriloquists genuinely "throw" their voices? If genuine, how is the phenomenon achieved?

I'M AFRAID not. Ventriloquists use their vocal chords (not their stomachs, though ventriloquist literally means "belly-speaker") to make and articulate sounds, just like everyone else. The illusion of sound coming from outside the ventriloquist's body is a skilfully produced effect, relying on the ventriloquist's ability to make sounds without moving her/his lips, and the ventriloquist's manipulation of visual and other signals which convince the observer that sound is coming from elsewhere.

These other signals may include the movements of a doll or dummy, but the use of ventriloquism is actually older than its association with the dummy. For example, the ventriloquist can also open and close a box while alternately amplifying and muffling sound, thus convincing an audience that the sound comes from the box. — *Ian Saville, London*

THE universe has evolved from simple beginnings towards stunning complexity. In the process it has presumably been obeying certain fundamental laws of physics. But were these laws there from the beginning or have they too evolved? Are they continuing to do so?

THAT the universe has evolved from simple beginnings is really an assumption rather than a fact, since we know that the physical laws we understand from laboratory experiments and astronomical observations break down at the extremely high temperatures present in early stages of the Big Bang. We have no theory of the very beginning.

It is likewise an assumption that the fundamental laws of physics apply for all times since the Big Bang. Making this assumption, cosmologists are able to build a coherent description of the evolution of the universe from its very early stages which does not seem to be in conflict with the observations. This makes the assumption a reasonable one — but does not prove it to be correct.

Both these assumptions are made on grounds of simplicity, following the idea that the simplest theory compatible with the data is always the best. But nobody knows whether the universe is really as simple as the theories we use to describe it. Anyway, suppose the laws of physics do change with time: do they themselves change according to some deeper law? In the words of Patrick Moore: "We just don't know." — *Dr Peter Coles, Astronomy Unit, Queen Mary & Westfield College, London*

THE universe had no "beginnings", being necessarily infinite in time and space. The universe "obeys laws" only in the anthropocentric imagination of scientists. The evolving "fundamental laws of physics" are cultural artefacts, created and amended by physicists, which reflect the evolving cultural values of a civilisation ruled by laws. — *Philip Lloyd Lewis, Bournemouth*

HOW many people has the mobile phone already killed on the road?

THE answer's likely to be a wrong number. — *Michael Paul, Alfreton, Derbyshire*

Any answers?

I'VE read that the name "Gary" derives entirely from the popularity of movie actor Gary Cooper in the 1940s and that there were no Garys in Britain before then. Is this true? — *Dave Hewitt, Glasgow*

WHICH countries do not have any McDonald's restaurants? — *Ray Riggs, Manchester*

ARE VCRs available that skip the adverts? — *Don Rickard, Ashburton, New Zealand*

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GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Russia and the real enemy within

Once the Red Army was a mighty fighting machine. Now the mother country is defended by a rag-tag assortment of poorly paid, poorly clothed, poorly fed conscripts led by corrupt, idle officers. Jobless and disillusioned, many demobbed soldiers are turning to crime. James Meek reports from Moscow

A *CURIOUS* discovery awaited detectives inside the flat at 20 Rublyovskoye Chaussee as they searched for clues to the identity of the killers of its elderly residents — Anna Ichko, found strangled on the sofa, and her husband Andrei, discovered with a head wound, under a stairwell.

The murderers, who had fled the apartment that morning after being surprised by the victims' daughter, took clothes, an old Panasonic radio, some jewellery and cash. But perhaps made careless by the vodka they had found in the fridge, they left behind two rough khaki jackets of the kind worn by rank-and-file soldiers in the Russian army.

After killing the pensioners, the perpetrators had sat down and laboriously pinned Andrei Ichko's 20 or so military decorations to one of the jackets.

Despite the solid clue, the case would probably have joined the Moscow police's long list of unsolved murder cases were it not for the fact that the Ichkos' daughter was married to one of Boris Yeltsin's personal doctors, Vladlen Vtorushin.

Suspicion fell on two young conscripts from the Volga region, Sergei Mikhailov and Andrei Semyonov, who deserted from a garrison near the Ichkos' flat on October 2, five days before the murders. After an intensive manhunt they were tracked down to a hostel in Petrozavodsk, close to the Finnish border. Police claim they confessed immediately: one has already talked about the killing on television.

The case has yet to come to court but the heavy media coverage given to the investigation has strengthened the growing association in the public mind between the armed forces and crime.

The pampered military behemoth of Soviet days, central to the cult surrounding the Union's finest hour — the defeat of Nazi Germany — has sunk lower than would have been thought possible five years ago in both power and prestige. Analysts estimate that of its 78 divisions, the Russian army could now field and supply in full battle order only one. To mention the army is to conjure up an image of hunger and rags, of officers and their families struggling to survive in single dormitory rooms without being paid for months on end, of corruption, pilfering, bullying and draft-dodging on a huge scale.

At the same time as the Ichko case, two soldiers at an air defence base on the Pacific island of Sakhalin went Awol after gunning down four of their colleagues. Higher up the military echelon, the figure of the crooked general, embezzling funds and press-ganging soldiers to build himself a palatial dacha, has become a stock character of outraged political discourse.

The new generation of young urban Russians, the children of perestroika, attuned to a world of music videos, Western snack foods, free speech and free choice, look on the army as a throwback to a darker age: national service is a punishment for a crime not committed. Those who return to cities such as Moscow and St Petersburg find themselves looked on with a mixture of fascination, sympathy and fear by their friends who avoided the draft, as if they have just got out of prison.

"The army is a mirror of the country as a whole. If there's no order in the country, how can there be in the army?" says Maria Fedulova of the Russian Committee of Soldier's Mothers, the most active organisation working to protect conscripts.

Fedulova's own son was a conscript who fought in the Chechen war. He was demobilised last year and has still been unable to find work. "There have been occasions when he's found a job, but as soon as they find out he served in Chechenia, they say openly: 'We don't need Afghan veterans and we don't need Chechen veterans.' They know what the problems can be with these boys. They've had no rehabilitation. They're unpredictable."

The NLO Café (NLO equals UFO) near Moscow's Belarus station is Russian kiosk architecture taken to its illogical limits: a cavernous white shed deposited on an area of what was once public park space, fitted with lights and lino and a few cheap chairs and tables, where the flotsam and jetsam of the hustling trader life around the national railheads slinks in out of the weather for a bottle of Baltika or a plastic cup of instant coffee.

Yura, not yet 20, colandered his empty cup with dabs of a glowing fag-end and ran through his life since leaving school. Behind him, through the glass, commuters crowded round the displays of vodka and wine and chocolates in the windows of another row of kiosks.

Two years ago, he was part of that world, making a reasonable living as a vodka salesman, buying litre bottles of Troika from Holland and Rasputin from Germany and hawking them around shops and factories. He had just graduated from school, and hoped to get into an élite economics institute, which would have saved him from the draft. He failed, and heeded the call-up without too much concern, expecting a year of useful physical training and six quieter months to prepare for another attempt at college.

He was assigned to a regiment of interior ministry troops near the Volga city of Ulyanovsk — one of the many different branches of conscript soldiery which make up the rambling Russian armed forces.

One of the obscure legacies of Soviet days plaguing the miserable lives of conscripts is that they are not allowed access to radio or television in their first year of service. Only by rumour did Yura's company hear that Russian forces had rolled into Chechenia in December. In July, they were sent themselves. They were told they were going for three months. In fact, it was 10.

Yura's reminiscences have an eerie echo about them of the tales of GIs in Vietnam (although unlike the grunts of 1969, most of the Russians have seen Platoon and Apocalypse Now on video): the uncertainty about what they were supposed to be doing, the unseen enemy picking them off from the hills and forests around — his regiment lost 30 men — the hostility between officers and enlisted men, and the desperate attempts to edit the passage of time.

"IT WAS difficult to get vodka," he says. "Some people picked hemp which grows wild in Chechenia. It was too weak to smoke so you could roast it or cook it with milk — but there wasn't any milk, so we usually fried and ate it. To get away from reality. Folk drank *chefir*, which is a whole box of tea in a single mug of water. Some people sniffed petrol. There were different ways. They kept telling us we would be withdrawn."

Yura bought a cassette player and stole a battery from an armoured car. Some of the company's bitterest battles were fought between the minority of "metallisty" — lovers of heavy metal and hard rock — and *aficionados* of rap. "I always preferred Metallica, the Scorpions, Nirvana especially," he says. "But there were fewer of us. So that music was heard less."

The company lived in trenches, ate porridge — potatoes on holidays — and slept on mattresses on wooden boards. In winter, on a good day, there was wood for a fire. Otherwise they quarrelled over who got to wear the few chemical warfare capes there were to go round. Fighting between the soldiers was constant: at one point a private, fed up with being bullied, opened up with his rifle. Whole months would go by without the men seeing their officers.

"Basically everything was settled by force there," says Yura. "The officers lived their lives and we lived ours. They lived inside the camp and we carried out defence on the perimeter."

Yura's war ended with the news that his father had died. The telegram never reached him: he only found out because his former teacher knew he was in Chechenia and contacted the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers. It took him three days to get back to Moscow and he missed the funeral. With the committee's help, he was able to get a discharge. He came home to the two-room flat he shares with his mother and his four brothers and sisters. But he feels he has not come home to Moscow as he remembers it. "I was struck after I came back when I switched on the TV and saw the news about the rebel attack on Grozny in August. So many people were killed, and yet you switch channels and they're showing entertainment, nightclubs and so on. They just spit on all these people dying. The Americans suffer for every one of their soldiers who dies. It's not like that with us.

"I feel as if I'm not from here any more. I came from here but I've come back to another place. There are days when I just lie in bed and think about all sorts of things. Futile thoughts. It's not the memory of the cold or the hunger or how the rebels shot at us or how the commanders treated us. It's all of these things together."

When last year the late-night tabloid TV show Vremochko broadcast interviews with two conscripts in Moscow who described how they performed oral sex for money, the reaction from viewers was revealing. Most wrote in to express disgust and disbelief; one erudite viewer languidly pointed out that the practice has been known since Tsarist times.

The Russian army has always brutalised its recruits. During the Crimean war Tolstoy was struck by the difference between the confident bearing of British prisoners and the servility of the Russian troops. In the Imperial Russian army, soldiers were not conscripted *en masse* but those required to go were obliged to serve for 20 years. Much of the success of the Red Army during the second world war was down to the sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of men in frontal attacks.

TALKING to military analysts such as Alexander Golz, of the army newspaper Red Star, and to Ms Fedulova, of the mothers' committee, a difference of priorities emerges. For the military experts, reform is about making the armed forces effective again as a fighting machine; for the mothers it is about making the army, and society as a whole, care about individuals.

"From 1991, when the Russian armed forces were created, it was clear that such an army was an unbearable burden on the economy, and that the state could not feed it," says Golz. "We will have to recognise that cardinal military reforms can't be carried out. Better to accept the inevitability of a slow, tortuous process of reform over 10 years."

Ms Fedulova saw the best hope less in government reform of the military than in the growing rebelliousness of the young. "The kids have already grown up a little bit differently. They've become a bit less yielding to authority. They've begun to think freely — not much, but they have begun. They're not like us. We basically lived according to a programme the party set down."

She laughed when asked why her organisation wasn't called the Committee of Soldiers' Fathers. "Fathers do come here, when their sons have taken a really good beating, when they finally begin to think. But when it comes to their sons being called up — they know there's a war going on, they know what goes on in the army, yet their attitude is: I did my time, let him do his. Our men have a more brutal approach. We're mothers, we don't bear children for them to become warriors."

Few observers who know the current state of the Russian military believe there are officers with the desire or capacity to lead an insurrection from within. But the pilfering, degradation, brutality, suicides and carelessness show little sign of improving.

One of the recent conscripts at the mothers' committee offices in Moscow was 19-year-old Sergei, from Smolensk, trying to get a transfer from a unit in the Siberian city of Barnaul where, he says, he is being bullied mercilessly by conscripts from north Caucasus. His unit is responsible for a flight of nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles. What had the officers said when he complained to them about the bullying? "They told me to sort it out for myself."



Dead beat . . . A Russian soldier beside the body of a comrade killed in Chechenia. Thirty years may separate their war from that fought by US troops in Vietnam, but the tales of Moscow's young conscripts eerily echo those of the GIs
PHOTOGRAPH: EPIX/SYGMA

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Castle heir . . . Jay Khadka with Richard Morley in the grounds of Clearwell
PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS JONES

Futuristic family faced with exile

Richard Morley explains how the Home Office's decision to deport his heir, a young Nepalese, will devastate the 21st century 'community' he created

EVERY EVENING just before dinner, the fire bell echoes briefly to remind everyone that it is time to gather for the most important event of the day. Although we still eat in the oak-panelled hall of Clearwell Castle in Gloucestershire, where for centuries the earls of Dunraven also took their meals, it is not a banquet. We rarely have more than two courses and there are no staff. Two of us will lay the table, prepare the meal and serve it with a minimum of fuss.

It is not the meal that is important but our being all together. It is a happy time when the events of the day are discussed and the problems of tomorrow resolved. We congregate as a family to share our lives and our troubles so that no one is unhappy.

However, one huge problem has remained unsolved for nearly five years. Jay Khadka, our beloved son and heir, has lived under the constant threat of deportation since the Home Office rejected our application for him to remain on compassionate grounds. It is a prospect that fills us with horror. We are eight people aged from 18 to 43 who have pledged to live permanently together despite having no blood or other conventional ties between us.

We are ordinary people who vary widely in race, education and social background, who have made mistakes in life from which we have hopefully learnt. Some have university degrees; others never went beyond GCSE. Some are employed in senior positions while others do no work outside the family. Our tastes vary from Handel and before to Hawkwind and beyond. We have four different religious backgrounds and most people would regard even a friendship between us as unlikely. Yet we are all able to share the same philosophy and live together in such stability and harmony that any other domestic arrangement would be unthinkable.

Our family is now 15 years old. It began at Birmingham university as an idea suggested during one of those student evenings when young people discuss the world's problems. We were concerned about the apparent conflict between commitments to our partners, our other friendships and our careers. We felt that the notion of belonging to one other person until death was under severe pressure in modern life. Significant and rapid changes in employment patterns, sexual equality and social opportunities were exerting different pressures on our relationships than in our parents' time. The basic unit of society, the family, seemed about to undergo radical evolution.

We did not see a return to the past system as an answer to the problems of the future. We did not believe that evolution would go backwards. We felt that society would naturally evolve and adjust to an ever-shrinking and densely populated planet. And so two of us, Jeremy Skene and myself, embarked on an adventure to explore the potential for a new family structure which might fare better. It had to evolve beyond the alternative units set up in the sixties which became short-lived and unstructured. The need for stability was paramount, and gradually over the next 15 years we put together, through trial and error, the fundamentals of a new family system which could work not only for us but for society in general.

IT HAD to provide a safety net for unemployment whilst still allowing individuals freedom in their careers. It had to supply a healthy environment for the upbringing of children. It needed to cope with the reality that we often love more than one person in life and that this tendency is neither immoral nor harmful to society. It required a facility to cope with infirmity and old age so that the elderly wouldn't always be so isolated from those they love. And we needed the hope that such families would have fewer natural children, easing population growth.

Our research to build such a unit took us from libraries of Cambridge to the jungles of Indonesia. Our family structure was a carefully managed project which had to solve a whole range of problems. We reasoned that we needed to grow slowly in number so that each member should be settled before another was accepted.

We knew we could not all be the same age or we would all eventually be infirm together. And we knew that men and women had to be integrated in true equality with a philosophy that transcended all religions and cultures. We needed stability.

It was a tall order, but year by year it gradually came together. We now consider ourselves to be a true family with all the strength of traditional bonds but with a futuristic structure that can survive the rigours of modern life both today and tomorrow. Our only real problem lies with the Home Office, for we are not legally recognised as being a family. We could not legally adopt Jay and so he must be deported.

Jay helped to build the new family unit throughout his childhood. The simplicity of his origins was inspirational to its growth. As he learned about our society, we learned from him. He has become both an integral part of the family and the future of it. So strong are bonds between us that we cannot now abandon our son, who was the first to be brought up in this way.

Normally we would expect our natural children to move on eventually and join other such new family units. But although we know of several other groups who are now taking up the idea in England, there are no such units in Nepal for Jay to join. Without his family, he would live perpetually in despair, and without him so would we.

Our decision to go into exile with Jay if necessary was therefore quite straightforward. It was not a matter of discussion or deliberation.

I had promised a man who had once helped save my life that I would care for his son as my own if tragedy ever overtook him. Years later, fate determined that my word would be tested and, when I eventually found Jay living in such terrible misery, I naturally promised him I would keep it. He likewise pledged himself to be my son and the matter was settled. We cut our fingers and became blood brothers, marking our written pledge in a tribalistic way that needed no other language to express the depth of feeling between us. The concept of either of us breaking this bond is as alien to us as murder. The question simply does not arise. But ultimately the logic of our commitment to Jay is simply plain, old-fashioned love.

The philosophy that binds us together is very simple — love is the giving of everything with the expectation of nothing in return.

Exile may seem like a heavy price to pay for that love, but the question of cost is irrelevant. To have a perpetually empty seat at dinner would be a far greater loss to bear.

And to know that Jay would always eat in isolation of those he loves is unthinkable. Of course we shall always stand by him. For us, it is a fundamental of family life.

Me, myself and I

Once the personal was political, now the personal is all there is, argues Charlotte Raven

FEMINISM is many things: a political programme, a critical tool, an excuse for writing crap poetry and naturally, for some, a way of life. For me, however, it has always been a lingerie issue. As a symbol of our oppression and, more recently, as a mark of our alleged sexual freedom, the bra is feminism's most hotly contested sign. It is possible to read the whole history of women's liberation as the story of our relationship with this strangely fashioned object of desire.

We take it up in the seventies, when Germaine Greer was frightening Gossard with some less than uplifting news. "The vegetable creep of women's liberation has freed some breasts from the domination of foam and wire." This line, from The Female Eunuch, encapsulates the attitude of feminism's second wave. Women, like their breasts, had been deformed and rendered passive by constraint. Feminism's job was to make them see that what they thought they wanted — husbands, food mixers — were simply the effects of conditioning and what they really *needed* — fun, lovers, freedom — was achievable only by refusing traditional feminine roles. If you were American, you burned your bra; if you were British, you washed it and put it away.

A decade or so later, we were suddenly "post-feminism". It is always worth reminding ourselves that feminists finished with feminism long before it had served the purpose it was set. But then, who cares about equal pay, childcare or abortion, as long as you're busy retrussing yourself in some fake Gaultier bustier with devil-take-Political-Correctness trim? The icon of the hour was Madonna, a woman whose bold and uninhibited sexuality found expression in a series of inhibiting conical bras. Following her example, the post-feminists brought breasts back into corrective custody.

And now, it is said, we are "post-post-feminism". Breast-wise, this means a rejection of the stylised fetish-girl approach in favour of rather more traditional, one might say *feminine*, lines. And who needs all that sisterhood stuff when you can have MEN, who are, after all, quite sweet?

Current consensus has it, then, that women can afford to relax a bit in the knowledge of a job well done. What more could we ask for, after all? We have lovers, careers and fun. We have husbands when we want them, exes when we don't, ultra-thin towels and ultra-long lashes.

Much of the available evidence would seem to support the "future is female" view. Girls are doing better than boys at school. (In every subject, that is, except physics — we've changed, but not that much.) Women are doing better than ever in the workplace where, finally, sexist attitudes appear to be on the decline. We live longer, look nicer and kill ourselves less often than men.

On the other hand, looked at from the perspective of our original agenda, we might not be doing so well. In politics and industry, the boys still have all the best gigs. Women in Britain account for one in nine MPs and make up 35 per cent of executive directorships. Meanwhile, on the economic front, middle-class "girls on top" triumphalism seems selfish and crass when you look at the statistics — as well as the lives of those it disregards. More than 6 million women have earnings below the Low Pay Unit's "decency threshhold". And women are still being harassed, murdered, raped and beaten up by men.

To listen to post-post-feminists, however, you'd think we were living in a culture from which all these small unpleasantnesses have long since been excised. But it's all very well declaring victory from an Islington kitchen, not so easy from a Birmingham sweatshop, a battered women's refuge, the streets around Kings Cross . . .

And yet the facts are not disputed: it is simply a question of how they are being received. The contradictory nature of the evidence means feminists can read it either way.

What we are seeing, therefore, is not the triumph of feminism as such, but the success — and complacent withdrawal — of a single selfish strand. This is the me-first tendency that launched itself with the slogan from which all future problems would stem: "The personal is political." From the moment this individualist philosophy took hold, feminism as a force for change was sunk. The movement stopped concerning itself with social forces, power relations and even — in the end — men, and released its adherents to worry about the subject in which they had always been more interested: themselves.

VERY QUICKLY feminism forgot that self-expression was intended as a means to an end. The political lost its fight for life and the personal took over. No longer bothered about gaining rights, we focused instead on that promotion, those Gucci shoes, more orgasms than you ever thought possible — and conceived feminism as the route map to the fulfilment of our every desire.

Cosmopolitan magazine teaches us that being a strong woman involves going out and getting what you want. Our every whim is validated, therefore, as an act of self-assertion. Narcissism is a virtue. The ethical hole in modern feminism is its failure to generate anything but self-justification. Desire itself is politicised, self-gratification a right. And so if women want to strip, good on them. If men want to use prostitutes, why not? All the things we used to condemn as the hopeless, helpless acts of patriarchal pre-conditioning are now regarded simply as a matter of personal taste. We have lost the ability to analyse or contextualise anything in terms other than the discourse of self. The personal *is* — and politics would contravene this message by insisting on the collective "men and women" rather than simply "you and I".

The argument is really just a back-to-basics plea for socialisation. Because if what you want and what I want are not the same, then what? And what if what you want is to hurt, degrade or underpay me — who is going to speak on my behalf? Not the old post-post-feminists, that's for sure, who are too busy shopping at sex shops for bras. If we don't have feminism, men won't change: why should they, if we're saying they are all right as they are? We cannot give up on politics, unless we really do believe this is as good as it gets.

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Saxman in a blue moon

JAZZ
John Fordham

MAYBE the fact that the British saxophonist Jon Lloyd was competing with Guy Fawkes for audiences at Dolly Fossett's in Kentish Town last week explained why the size of the audience suggested a meeting of the conspirators rather than the revellers, but there's more to it than that. Lloyd's virtual invisibility on a jazz scene dominated by a handful of celebrities has everything to do with resources and promotion and nothing to do with his skills, which appear to expand with every opportunity to hear him play, and blue moons cross the firmament a lot more often than that.

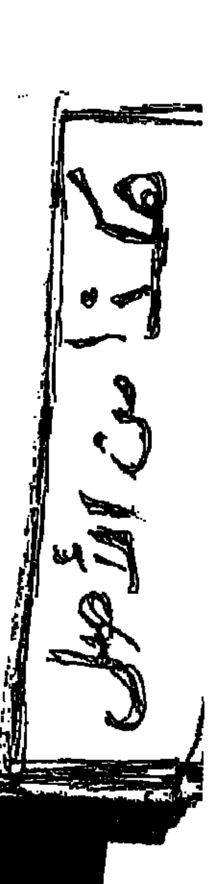
Lloyd was appearing with his quartet on the last leg of a four-gig tour organised by Jazz Services. His concept of a small group setting owes something to the early acoustic bands of Ornette Coleman (there are fascinating, slithery tunes with bebop as a distant rather than intimate relative, and on-the-fly contrapuntal improvisations by the players behind whoever is soloing), except that Lloyd's harmonic world permits the fixed-pitch interventions of a pianist and Coleman's didn't. But Lloyd's pianist, John Law, who goes on the road himself this week, is a classically-trained maverick with a loose, kaleidoscopic style who doesn't cramp the harmonic choices open to those around him.

Lloyd's methods as a soloist balance orthodox jazz (complex chromatic runs, vocalised swoops and wails, fleetingly bluesy feel) and the avant-garde, notably Evan Parker's hollow, dolorous split-notes and multi-layered effects.

But though the band was competing with the pop sound system downstairs with little more than energy and empathy for assistance, it resoundingly defeated it in a series of taut and forceful episodes — notably the leader's sax/piano duet with John Law in the first half, his whooping, high-pitched soprano sax tracing (as if in ironic reflection of the night sky outside) silvery patterns of sustained notes and briefly explosive incandescence against Law's dark, scudding chords.

Unlike many improvisers who can play as spontaneously and intuitively, Lloyd loves composition, and is one of the most striking writers at the sharp end of British jazz and improvisation. Three-Two, a journey into rhythmic contrasts initiated by a repeated double-bass figure against stuttery drumming, built up irresistible momentum as Law and Lloyd joined in, and the pianist resoundingly unwrapped his jazz credentials against Mark Sanders's stimulatingly disruptive drumming with a powerful exposition on a piece of uptempo post-bop called Resilience.

The Lloyd group's upcoming disc, By Confusion, on the Hat Hut label, will be worth catching early in 1997 if the current showing is anything to go by.



The truth about Picasso

Picasso has spawned a posthumous industry, but has the man himself been lost, asks **Adrian Searle**



Blue in the face . . . Picasso Self-Portrait (1972)

THERE are too many Picassos: Picasso the protean, the towering genius: the macho, gun-toting Cubist from Malaga. There's Picasso the destroyer; the drugged-up Blue Period symbolist. There's also Picasso the classicist, the communist, the pacifist, the surrealist, the poet, the playwright, the ceramicist, the sculptor.

He has become a posthumous industry for antagonistic biographers, hagiographers, fictionalisers, analysers and mythomanes. At the Grand Palais in Paris, the weary hordes are standing in line for Picasso And Portraiture, a chronological survey focusing on the artist's consummate rearrangements and deformations of faces and bodies.

The exhibition, which includes almost 150 works, begins and ends with self-portraits: from Picasso aged 19, in a powdered wig, loosely and confidently painted in 1897, up to the pencil and crayon skulls from the summer of 1972, death-masks of the living artist made months before he died at the age of 91.

But as much as the crowd that endlessly waits to see Picasso's dramatic, self-mocking and self-aggrandising appraisals of his own identity and mortality, they wait especially to see Picasso's women.

Fernande, Eva, Olga, Marie-Therèse, Dora, Françoise, Jacqueline and the others, the official and unofficial lovers, the mistresses and wives, paid homage to, fantasised over, transmuted and transfigured, turned from objects of desire to objects of . . . what, precisely? Derision, hatred, fear? Marie-Therèse as a pink mess on the bed, or as a snouted, bulbous beachball. Nusch Eluard (with whom Picasso denied ever having an affair) as a prototype for Beavis and Butt-head. Dora, sphinx-like and skeletal, Jacqueline as a fifties sitcom housewife.

But the business of interpreting the life and psychology of the artist, his feelings and his temperament, via the works, is a fraught affair. The figures in the paintings have a life of their own.

The painter's work may be his best autobiography, yet it is a biography primarily of the painter, rather than of the man. Whoever said the artist had to be a nice guy? That Picasso the man was not big on family values is an understatement. He was far from the late 20th-century New Man.

IN BOTH the first and second volumes of his magisterial biography, John Richardson repeats just this point — that he feels the need to do so is as tiresome and irritating for the reader as it is for the author. The long-awaited second volume of Richardson's A Life Of Picasso, which covers the years 1907 to 1917, sets out the work, the life and the attendant characters from the inception of Les Demoiselles, which Richardson once called Picasso's Apocalyptic Whorehouse, to the beginnings of his classical phase at the end of the first world war. We shuttle between Paris, Barcelona, Ceret and Cadaqués, between Gertrude Stein's Saturday salon and the filth of the Bateau Lavoir. Richardson picks apart the art and the life. He is as careful to distinguish the influence of the art of the past and of his contemporaries on Picasso's development as the influence of his lovers, his friends, his milieu.

We see Picasso treating his lovers well and treating them badly, and we see the artist's work in terms of his intellectual and emotional life, rather than the other way around. This is why Norman Mailer's Portrait Of Picasso As A Young Man is such a dull, awful, salacious read. Mailer reads everything backwards.

However much he peppers his prose (ironically, it is to be hoped) with a schoolmasterly, Lord Clark of Civilisation "let us now look" tone of voice, interspersed with references to the likes of Muhammad Ali, and frequent stabs at guessing the artist's emotional, psychosexual and intellectual state, he remains unsure of his ground. Perhaps to his credit, Mailer does wonder about Picasso's sexuality — did he or did he not have a queer moment or two in his youth? Mailer is clearly following Zsa Zsa Gabor's maxim that men who are too macho are normally not mucho.

Richardson, in collaboration with Marilyn McCully, is writing a biography that is both academically superb and illuminating, and filled with gossip, asides and humour. By contrast, Mailer's utterly humourless, portentous romp fails on just about every level.

And now the multitude of Picassos has been swollen with a Merchant Ivory film, Surviving Picasso. The irony of Sir Anthony Hopkins playing the artist is not lost. If Picasso's relationship to women was troubled, his relation to other artists was positively cannibalistic: Picasso paid homage, criticised, borrowed and stole from everyone and anyone. It wasn't so much a case of lock up your daughters as lock up your paintings.

But this was part and parcel of Picasso's talent, and anyhow, he often handled the ideas and motifs of the artists he took from better than they did themselves. Two excellent recent books, Picasso's Variations On The Masters, by Susan Grace Galassi, and Picasso And The Spanish Tradition, edited by Jonathan Brown, variously record the artist's reworkings and unpaid debts to El Greco, Velazquez, Goya, Rembrandt, Poussin, Manet, Renoir, Cranach, Courbet, Delacroix . . . the list goes on.

There may be too many Picassos, but there's a little of each of the above in him, and more than a little of him in the artists who have come after him. Picasso is the great indecipherable of the waning century. The accusations and exculpations pay little account to our own unpaid debts to his art, and while he may well have behaved like a shit, the humanity of his work is never in the least doubt.

Picasso Et Le Portrait is at the Galeries Nationales Du Grand Palais, Paris, till January 20. A Life Of Picasso, Volume 2 1907-17, by John Richardson (Jonathan Cape, £30); Portrait Of Picasso As A Young Man, by Norman Mailer, (Little, Brown and Company, £25); Picasso's Variations On The Masters, by Susan Grace Galassi (Abrams, £30); Picasso And The Spanish Tradition, edited by Jonathan Brown (Yale University Press, £30); Surviving Picasso, a film directed by James Ivory and produced by Ismail Merchant, opens in January

Done too much, much too young

DANCE
Judith Mackrell

WHEN the huge palace gates close on act one of Sleeping Beauty, we know that Aurora's 100-year sleep cannot flaw her dewy beauty. In LaLaLa's latest work, 2, a huge gilded screen also descends to protect the prone figure of its "ballerina" Louise Lecavalier. But in the film sequences which are then projected over her head we don't see any dreams of youth. Only footage of Lecavalier as she now is at 38, and simultaneously Lecavalier made up to look as if she's 90.

Wrinkles re-write the topography of her face, her eyes look milky and her gestures are tentative, as if she's finally lost her dancer's magic reflexes.

For 2 seems to be about the ageing of LaLaLa's famous star, the dancer whose fierce beauty and blazing leaps have made audience's jaws drop for nearly two decades. Lecavalier still prowls the stage with her old inviolate charisma, yet there are three younger women in the company — more supple and more eager — and the contrast between them is marked.

They show up the toll wrought by Lecavalier's ferocious style in her hard, balled muscles and stiffening sinews, and when she dances with one of the men it's as if she's fighting to regain the erotic supremacy of her early youth — demanding his attention with flying fists and feet, or collapsing in pathetic pleading.

At the close of the work, when she faces the image of her elderly self, she dances a storm of protest, flipping her body over and over as if refusing the approach of age.

Lecavalier's mysterious, feral detachment throughout all this makes her a kind of heroine. Yet, frustratingly, her story has no structure or substance. In fact there's a bizarre gulf between her and the rest of the work.

Firstly, choreographer Edouard Lock doesn't bother to set up any links between her and the flashy routines that he creates for the other seven dancers. Secondly, although the latter hurtle through space, flick their feet and kick the air to tatters with a glossy power, they do nothing else. They are either in a head-banging frenzy or an exhausted slump and the result is vacuous dance and mental exhaustion.

We have no idea why the dancers do what they do, or why they keep on doing it, and our stupor is aggravated by a score which blurs together three centuries of music



Louise Lecavalier: dances to the music of time

(from Rameau to Iggy Pop) into a loud rant.

For the first 45 minutes, we keep waiting for the piece to go somewhere. For the next 45 minutes we realise that Lecavalier is the sole performer in this empty gymnastic exercise who has any place to go.

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Gee, thank God he was born an American

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

IT WAS about 5.30am when Bill Clinton thanked his beloved mother who was smiling up there and saying "I never had any doubt!" This would be the widowed mother who, as he mentioned, had borne him in a summer storm. Up there is believed to be a reference to heaven.

As they say in America, everyone's for mother love, apple pie and tax relief.

I attribute Dole's failure to thrive entirely to the fact that, come 70, it's a little late to thank your mother. Dole — endearingly I felt — thanked the media instead. His audience booed heartily.

A vote of thanks in America is nothing if not comprehensive. It was a warm and balmy night in Little Rock, and Bill Clinton wasn't paying for the air time.

He began by saying no words could convey his gratitude but I think he was kidding. He thanked Hillary, Chelsea, his stepfather, his beloved mother, his wonderful mother-in-law, his friends, the people of Arkansas, Al Gore, Tipper Gore, Bob Dole, Jack Kemp, the members of his administration, the permanent staff of the White House, his Secret Service detail, his campaign staff, the Democrats running for office, civil servants, the late Ron Brown ("Who's looking down and smiling too"), the preachers who had come to the White House and brought him closer to God. Oh, and God. He thanked God he was born an American.

The BBC's lacklustre coverage came, judging by the echo, from a small church hall, sketchily decorated with a couple of creased American flags.

I voted for the livelier CBS coverage on Sky. Dan Rather, the veteran anchorman, wistfully mentioned the days when CBS covered elections with two tin cans and a piece of string. They now had Harry Smith and his Amazing Cyberset. Harry was in an empty room but, like Kardomah who used to fill the stage with flags, he filled it at will with all the whizz-bangery of computer-generated images. Peter Snow must have felt plain *sick*.

As a novelty the BBC did have a young lad surfing the internet. "Is the internet buzzing or whatever internets do?" asked David Dimbleby loftily. It was buzzing with callers complaining that Dimbleby had called them nerds.

While the White House itself was a shoo-in, the fight for the Senate was ferocious. Dan Rather said the contest between Dick Swett and Bob Smith in New Hampshire was as hot and tight as a too small bathing suit on a too long ride back from the beach.

Cries of "Yaroo!" "Geroff!" arose from the small fry scrapping in the playground. Dan said the stench of the Senate race in Alabama would gag a buzzard. Apparently Roger Bedford had called Jeff Session a Jacuzzi-soaking, Gucci-wearing, champagne-toasting, liberal, country club Republican, which sounds quite flattering to me, but must be fighting talk in Alabama.

The TV campaign in Minnesota, Dan said, was so nasty people had to send their kids out of the room when the commercials were on. You couldn't watch without a V chip. In New Jersey Dick Zimmer said Bob Torricelli took money from mobsters and Bob said he would never forgive Dick for the pain he had caused his family (his wife, grandmother, godfather etc).

I haven't, as Richard Dreyfuss said, been up this early since I was up this late. Dreyfuss proved a strikingly intelligent, articulate, amusing presenter for *In The Wild* (Meridian). He was in the Galapagos to explore evolution, the way one animal turns into something different, and that, oddly enough, is exactly what an actor does. Dreyfuss constantly, involuntarily turned into a different creature. He strove to think himself into the mind of a marine iguana: "What's the iguana's point of view?" Marine iguanas look like very old critics. He tried in vain to warm them up: "There were these three iguanas. A Catholic, a Protestant and a Jew . . . I've worked some tough crowds but . . ."

He identified completely with the flightless cormorant, a bird which is wondering whether to become a penguin. "This male has gone out to bring back something nice for the nest. And is there a thank you? Not enough. I've done that. He's now going back out again to get an ulcer. My sympathy is with you pal. And don't come back until you've brought me a nice piece of seaweed."

He tried to sneak up on tortoises mating: "I think the evidence is that they've finished because there are some cigarette butts around there." All very anthropomorphic and deplorable and funny. The producer was Justine Kershaw and the series producer Jeremy Bradshaw. Don't they sound as if one is on the point of evolving into the other?

Written in blood

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

THE thing to say about Neil Jordan's award-winning **Michael Collins** is that, had it been made in orthodox Hollywood fashion, it would probably have offended no one at all. But it would have been less than half the film, at double the cost.

The second observation has to be that, though the film will undoubtedly offend some people, simply because it is about an IRA hero thought to have been conveniently written out of history, it would take a peculiar mind-set to imagine it was either pro-violence or helpful to the present leaders of the IRA.

It is, after all, about a resistance fighter against the British in the early part of the century who had a lot of people killed but in the end eschewed violence, fought for peace and was killed by his own side as a traitor.

The film is large-scale and comfortably epic in proportion, but, given that any film-maker has to make the best of his fictional way home without regarding facts as absolutely sacred, has a clear sense of history, or at least interprets it with intelligence.

But how good is Michael Collins as a film? There could be argument about that, too, since Jordan's first film (Angel, produced by John Boorman) covered some of this emotional ground, and with a more personal depth and force than this epic ultimately vouchsafes. There is so much ground to cover this time that no character emerges with as much intensity as Stephen Rea's gunman in Angel.

Rea is in this film as well. He plays Ned Broy, the Dublin Special Branch policeman with whom Collins worked to build up an intelligence organisation. But the hero of the proceedings, as the title suggests, is Collins, played by Liam Neeson with a flair and breadth of expression he hasn't shown before, even in Schindler's List.

Perhaps, in fact, he is too much of a hero. Jordan seems to admit, with some glancing thoughts in the film, that Collins was a many-sided character, capable of cold ambition and even cruelty, as well as bravery and a thought process that finally recognised that peace was the only way the innocent could be protected from colonial and civil war.

This is not always made clear enough, and nor is the fact that he was simply a fighting man but a capable financial operator as well. Added to that, Collins's fraught relationship with Eamon De Valera, beautifully played by Alan Rickman as a stern but still vacillating idealist, seems a trifle unexplored at times.

The other weakness in the film lies in the triangular romance between Collins, Aidan Quinn's Harry Boland and Julia Roberts's Kitty Kiernan. This is not very convincingly worked out, even if it is acted in a lively enough manner.

That said, the film has a dramatic intensity and a swirling pace that disarm criticism. It is also, thanks to Chris Menges's cinematography and Anthony Pratt's production design, a good-looking work, convincingly in period and with a properly moral sense of the past.

This, in fact, is its bull point and one that divides it from the usual semi-historical film flim-flam. It is, I suppose, in one sense a pity that you have to treat it seriously since, in doing so, some will find it the more troublesome. I for one did as I watched Neeson/Collins orchestrate the guerrilla warfare that forced the British into the reprisal of Bloody Sunday and then towards the negotiating table.

But the film is so obviously appalled by the violence of both sides and makes Collins's eventual attempts to stop it so plain that you have at least to admire its even-handedness.

In the end, Michael Collins has many more pluses than minuses, considering the nature of its subject matter. It is big, bold and as honest and sincere as it can be in the circumstances. I can't see it going without admiring Oscar nominations, nor without some hatred for its very existence.

In so dismal a year for epics with any thought in their heads at all, it is surely worth noting with approval — and with the added hope that it might illuminate the present Troubles, rather than cloud them further.

'How do you spell Aaaah?' . . . Nagiko (Vivian Wu) and Jerome (Ewan McGregor) engage in some calligraphic foreplay in Peter Greenaway's The Pillow Book
PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM WHITBY

Peter Greenaway has never made a less than accomplished film, but nor is he ever likely to make one that's fully comprehensible at first sight, which is a bit of problem for your average film-goer. The Pillow Book, however, is a distinct advance on The Baby Of Macon, since its subject matter chimes in so extraordinarily well with Greenaway's concern for detail and the expressiveness of decoration.

Visually it is a constant treat, but what's there dovetails almost perfectly with the properly erotic concerns of the film, which are sex and power and the relevance of the past to the present and future.

It is hardly possible to synopsise the story adequately. But it concerns Nagito (Vivian Wu), the daughter of a famous Japanese calligrapher, who is married off at 18 to a dull archery enthusiast and runs away to Hong Kong, where she leads a successful modelling career.

Obsessed with the way her father wrote on her body, she seeks out lovers who will do the same. An Englishman she meets (Ewan McGregor) suggests she writes on her lovers' bodies instead, and an obsessed photographer wants to take the results to the homosexual publisher (Yoshi Oida), who once had sex with her father.

Greenaway traverses this weird story with a sensuous appreciation of the power of sex and, even more obviously, a determination to display the narrative in novel forms.

The weakness in almost all Greenaway films is that unless they are good of themselves, his actors receive little help to be better. They are figures on a more important landscape, as if manoeuvred by a brilliant puppeteer.

This is the case here. But what Greenaway has certainly achieved is an impressive look at how the past, present and future match as we stride towards the millennium with rather less certain footsteps than his own and a little less poetry in, or on, our bodies.

When Pascal Duquenne, the actor with Down's Syndrome in Jaco Van Dormael's The Eighth Day, won the Best Actor award at Cannes this year, there was a standing ovation. It was a splendid performance and a moving occasion. Unfortunately, the film itself — Van Dormael's second feature — is nothing like as good as his first, the remarkable Toto The Hero.

The Eighth Day has the estimable Daniel Auteuil as a harried sales executive who runs down a dog. He gives a lift to the person he thinks is its owner, Duquenne, who has run away from an institution. A friendship flowers during a series of hair-raising adventures.

It is, of course, difficult to escape sentimentality with such a subject. And it has to be said that the writer-director (who himself has a brother with Down's Syndrome) does his best. There is no sense that he is patronising the film's chocolate-guzzling central character. Slowly but surely, however, sentimentality does take the place of reality and the result is a European film aiming at sophistication that becomes more and more like a Hollywood epic about idiot savants.

Both Auteuil and Duquenne are excellent but you get the feeling that the making of the film must have been more intriguing than the film itself.

The president's favourite lawyer

Novelist Scott Turow doesn't see a problem with leading a double life, writes **Mark Lawson**

AN AMERICAN who found himself in Europe on presidential election day, Scott Turow arranged an absentee ballot in his home town of Chicago.

"I voted for Clinton," he says, although the Republicans would once have regarded multi-millionaire authors who stay at the Savoy as their constituency. "And with no real hesitation. He can be a little disappointing but I'm curious about what a second Clinton term will bring."

Turow's vote returns a compliment. In 1993, the newish president, beginning to feel a prisoner in the White House, organised an outing to a bookstore. A keen reader of crime fiction, he bought a copy of Pleading Guilty by Scott Turow. Subsequently, on each of the novelist's birthdays (he is now 47) the writer has received a presidential greetings card, with a query about when the next book will be coming.

The Laws Of Our Fathers has now arrived and Turow admits to being "very curious indeed to hear what the president makes of this one". You can see why. The book addresses the difficulties of the 1960s generation of draft-dodgers and pot-smokers in coming to positions of power and influence in the 1990s. Significantly, Turow abandoned the novel in 1991, having worked on it for 18 months, unable to see how the flashback scenes from the 1960s might pay off in the present-day. The Clinton era provided the answer by the questions it raised. How shall those who defied the law — on narcotics, military service and public order — now control society as judges, politicians and parents?

"I've watched a lot of my friends being lousy parents," says Turow, "because they can't stand saying no. They were anti-authoritarian in their attitudes and they don't like being the authority."

In The Laws Of Our Fathers, Judge Sonia Klonsky, a former 1960s radical, finds herself presiding over a murder trial in which victim, defendant, defence counsel and star newspaper reporter all have connections with Klonsky and her life in the decade of Vietnam and flower power. In that era, Turow was reading English at Amherst College, Massachusetts, and so was among the first generation of American lawyers who had regularly broken the law.

"Did you inhale?"

"Yes." His small frame shakes with laughter. "Yes, I did. My drug use, compared to some others, was less extreme. But I had one or two experiences with hallucinogenics, some adventures with serious drugs. Certainly, it was part of my life, as it was for most of my contemporaries."

The second decade after the second world war is widely blamed for the perceived collapse of morality and order in Britain and America. In as much as the Republican challenger, Bob Dole, had a theme, it seemed to be one of revenge on the sixties, an attempt by the second world war veterans to seize back the nation from the babyboomers.

"Absolutely," agrees Turow. "Dole attacked the Clintons specifically as products of the sixties, not perhaps realising what a large percentage of the electorate had shared that experience. Myself, I'm of two minds. The sixties were hedonistic, excessive, destructive, on the one hand. But, on the other, it opened up the country in ways that were really important. It made American democracy much more real, by breaking down narrowly-defined authority."

Turow's attempt to assess the consequences of an epoch in The Laws Of Our Fathers represents a conscious attempt to extend and deepen the legal thriller. His first two books — Presumed Innocent (1987) and The Burden Of Proof (1990) — were in a genre which he has characterised as the gyno-thriller. Pleading Guilty (1993) — the one President Clinton was photographed buying — dealt with a financial crime but ventured into



Scott Turow . . . 'People are very curious about the powers of lawyers. They also dislike them' PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

almost Greenian territory of guilt, sexual and religious, in general.

By the time that book appeared, the legal crime thriller, a genre Turow had effectively invented, had taken numerous other partners on to the case, including John Grisham, who rapidly became the world's best-selling writer.

Have you ever resented Grisham?

Turow responds with a most unlawyerly sigh and silence. "I don't resent him," he finally says. "I do resent the implication that we're two dogs fighting over the same piece of steak. Quite candidly, I couldn't write his books and I don't think he could write mine."

If the two writers ever collaborated on a novel, a sensible publisher would allocate plotting to Grisham, while Turow attended to the individual sentences. For Grisham, novels were the weekend hobby of a bored attorney. Turow was at the typewriter from his teens.

The legal thriller was recently declared the most profitable and popular single genre in American publishing. The progenitor of the trend has his own theory about why: "My own view is that the 1960s destroyed a variety of forms of consensual authority in America: church, family, school, local community. Because they were under attack and because the premises under which those institutions ruled were faulty. So the only forum left in which questions of value could be debated came to be the courthouse. So the law began to intrude into issues like abortion, surrogate motherhood and, most recently, same-sex marriage. And, because various institutions lost their sacrosanct nature, litigation expanded. Before the 1960s, it was unthinkable for a person to sue their doctor or their lawyer, or a child to sue a school-board. Now these are everyday occurrences. People are very curious about the power of lawyers. They also dislike them. These novels satisfy both that curiosity and that hostility."

Turow continues to practise law in Chicago in the afternoons after writing fiction in the suburbs in the mornings. A social and collegiate creature, he finds the isolation of the study difficult. He also still gets a thrill from the exercise of lengthily and expensively learned skills: "I enjoy the fact that I'm useful to another human being in a very direct way."

More useful than you can be by writing books?

"No. Useful in a different way. If someone is faced with indictment, and you persuade the prosecutors not to charge them, you have changed that person's life in a really tangible way."

And it doesn't matter if that person is guilty or not?

There is another tangible hesitation. In his novels, Turow uses the law to dissect moral complexities of this kind.

"To me," he at length admits. "No. That would not matter. Lawyers have relieved themselves of that problem. There's no question that it's much more gratifying to win the freedom of an innocent person. But I have to tell you, I've felt pretty good about myself in winning the freedom of a guilty person. The state's job is to make the case and you're job is to test that case."

The only problem he sees with his double professions is that a judge may sometimes resent Turow's literary success: "Judges react in different ways to celebrity lawyers. Judge Ito in the OJ Simpson trial was clearly star-struck. Others are carefully neutral. A problem I might face is that, since this genre took off, a lot of judges are frustrated novelists. They have a manuscript under the bench."

The Laws of Our Fathers is published by Viking at £16

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(revised and updated edition),
Earthscan 500pp £24.95 (paperback)

DUKE UNIVERSITY in the US has a rice diet house. People who tend to obesity check in and guinea pig-out on rice cooked without salt, and fruit, and lose weight and gain life expectancy. Most people in most countries of the world make do on around 200kg of grain per year. In the US and parts of Europe, however, most people consume 800kg of grain a year each — grain converted into beef, mutton, pork, chicken, cheese, milk and eggs.

Lester Brown once pointed out that everybody born before 1950 has watched the population of the planet double: the first generation to have this dubious privilege. New souls are added to the world's sum at the rate of 90 million a year. In 1950, the world caught 19 million tons of fish a year. In 1989, the catch was 89 million tons. It is now falling: the oceans simply may have no more to offer.

Between 1950 and 1990 the world grain harvest tripled. But at the start of 1996, world grain stocks were the lowest on record. Water is scarcer, hunger for land is greater. Overstocking of grassland ranges, says Brown, is now the rule rather than the exception: world output of beef and mutton went from 24 million tons in 1950 to 62 million tons in 1990. This growth has almost stopped. So the number of people with a steak in the future is already falling, as world populations soar.

Tough Choices is a kind of reality check: a pocket guide to the problems on the political plate. Joel Cohen's book is a feast of famine portents. It is brilliantly exercised about just how far populations can soar. A growth rate of 1.6 per cent? Sure thing, sir, let's see, that's 12 billion people on the planet in 2040 and 694 billion in 2150.

Cohen's work is academic: but only in the sense that he also looks carefully at the history of Malthusian mathematics and across the range of calculations of energy needs, land needs, calorie-per-head counts.

But man does not live by bread alone: he needs water. Water is already a huge problem and getting more problematic almost everywhere. In 1980 only 43 per cent of the globe had "reasonable access" to safe drinking water. Humans can scrape by on a few litres every day, but it takes 500 litres of water to grow 1 kg of wheat. Rice farmers use 5,000 litres for 1 kg of basmati or arborio.

Beef farmers are the ones who really spend water like money: Cohen calculates that 1,000 kilocalories of t-bone steak — 250 grams — costs 5.1 cubic metres of water, or 19 times as much as it takes to make 1,000 kilocalories of bread.

All this is dense stuff: less than 400 pages of arguments and more than 100 pages of appendices, notes and index. It ranges from the 800,000 tons of carbon monoxide from São Paulo's 2 million motor cars to the problems of altruism and the likelihood that Cohen could be related to Bangladeshi or Somali refugees by a common ancestor less than 30 generations back. It isn't a doom book: it is a kind of meta-analysis of the doom books.

And just possibly, the doomsayers may have had an effect. That's the point of awful prophecies: to be self-defeating. The calculations of Wolfgang Lutz's team for the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis suggest a better than evens chance that the planet's population might never double again, getting to 10.4 billion by 2100, but not quite doubling.

Compared with some predictions this sounds quite cheerful. It isn't. The numbers of poor and hungry have grown all through the fat years of the green revolution, and all the guesses about soil erosion, energy demands and water budgets point to a gloomy likelihood: that the lean years are about to begin.

Meanwhile the increases go on. In the last decade, the growth in population equalled the population of the world in 1600. The world food summit began on November 13. By November 17, when it ends, there will be another million or more mouths to feed. Boiled rice, anyone?

ILLUSTRATION: SPIKE GERRELL

Kings, Queens and gardeners

Terry Eagleton

The Story of Britain
by Roy Strong
Hutchinson 596pp £35

THE HISTORY of a nation is no more a story than it is a symphony or a soap opera. You can talk of the story of Pink Floyd or Marks & Spencer, since these things are projects with a shaping intention behind them. But there is no shaping intention behind British history from Hadrian to Heseltine. Nobody deliberately churned out a remarkable achievement called Britain, in the way that someone produced the paperclip or Mansfield Park. There is no plot to British history, no end or origin, no riveting suspense or astounding denouement. History may be full of rattling good yarns, but it doesn't constitute one in itself.

In this lavishly illustrated volume, designed for those who like easy-on-the-eye history and have the odd free corner on their coffee table, the art critic Roy Strong sets out by speaking of the history of the nation in aesthetic terms, as a "strong narrative" centred on powerful personalities. More than 500 pages later, he briskly undercuts his own project by confessing that there is no single unfolding pattern to it all.

The Story Of Britain has an epic fable to recount, one in which things are generally found to be in pretty good shape from the ancient Romans right up to the Rolling Stones, when British history took a nose-dive into materialism and amorality. Even here, however, Strong can't help sounding an upbeat note: at least, he remarks with an audible gritting of teeth, ours is the age of the common man. It's hard to feel that he secretly finds this any more enthralling than knocking a nail through his nose, but it belongs with his relentless cheeriness to affirm it. The irony is that that cheeriness is based on a bland indifference to the actual fate of the British "common man" throughout the centuries.

Like many such fables, Strong's book is really a history of the British ruling bloc rather than of the people who kept them in hounds and liquor. History for him consists of art, war, religion and high politics, while work, sexuality, material hardship get thrown a perfunctory paragraph here and there. Misery and distress are noted from time to time, but usually as a mere episode of a history steadily on the up. And if geography is about maps, then history is about chaps.

History is really the story of Great Men, in a book which devotes considerably more space to Inigo Jones than to the 17th century peasantry. Edward I was over six feet tall and majestic in presence; Edward II was "tall, good-looking, with fair curly hair, muscular in build"; Richard II invented the handkerchief; Henry V had a long oval face and full red lips. What is this, a chronicle or a beauty contest? Elizabeth I's campaign in Ireland is recorded, but not the fact that it was genocidal. The slave trade is passed over discreetly in a sentence or so, and one turns a page to discover that the nation has suddenly, painlessly acquired an empire.

Eighteenth century gardens receive more attention than 18th-century bread riots. In this 18th century golden age, Strong rhapsodises, "everywhere life assumed a new radiance" (one thinks of all those beaming handloom weavers), even though he also lets slip that over half the population were sunk in poverty. A chapter revealing the rigid hierarchies of Victorian England is mysteriously entitled "Victorian Britain: the Classless Society".

Things aren't improved by Strong's Ladybird style, rich in emulsive banalities. "Roman soldiers looked very different from the Celts they defeated"; "for centuries the church had gone through good and bad periods"; Henry II showed that "red hair and fits of temper often go together". There are snatches of newsreel history: "Everywhere the Romans went they took their civilisation with them." Since the book is too hard for five-year-olds but too simple-minded for anyone older, and since the author himself admits that there's nothing particularly original in it, one wonders what he thought he was offering.

The answer is broadly political: what is important isn't any particular sentence in the book, most of which are stalely familiar, but the act of rehearsing this tale right now. In the teeth of the current leftist "deconstruction" of Britishness, Strong wants to persuade a "younger generation of islanders" to contemplate what it is that binds them together as British. What it was for their forebears, so Linda Colley has argued, was a heady brew of Francophobia and anti-Catholicism; perhaps for the younger generation today it's football or Pakistanis or Britpop or nothing in particular.

Strong himself wouldn't be much enthused by any of these brutally realistic responses, even though his conservatism can be critical enough: he thinks that traditionalism has led to the nation's economic decline and is in some respects a zealous moderniser. But he also believes that the fact that Britain is an island is more important than any other in understanding its history, a claim which provides his very first sentence and which is palpably false. Geography, in short, is destiny: the fact that Britain is surrounded by water mysteriously accounts for our pragmatism, tolerance, innate conservatism.

To ask "less when and how than why" is how Strong describes his aim here. In fact, nothing could be more ludicrously at odds with his practice. This portrait-gallery brand of history shows no grasp of social causality or structural conflict, so that while what the book says is usually pretty predictable, what it fails to say is resoundingly eloquent. It is the historiography of the victors, who unlike their victims do not know that states of emergency are routine rather than untypical.

A hooker at bedtime

Veronica Lee meets a German crime writer who is streets ahead of the rest

FEMALE crime novelists, in Britain at least, tend to be middle-aged, middle-class and in one case, a Dame. Pieke Biermann, Germany's best-selling crime writer, is the former two, but was once a dame of a very different kind: a high-class prostitute.

Biermann's five years on the game began on the day she was granted her literature and politics degree at Hanover University. The six-footer with multicoloured cropped hair explains her decision as "an intelligent act. A friend offered me work at the Hanover Fair. I realised I had a choice: either work on one of the stands and be nice, or work with the clients and be nice and earn a lot more money."

"Proper" jobs held no attraction; in Biermann's view, they were a form of prostitution themselves. "It's not only the job, but the power play that goes on daily. It's immoral for me to be in that game, where one is powerless. In prostitution, all is made very clear — this is business, this is power, this is desire, this is the mechanics, and we deal with it in decent circumstances."

Biermann's start in life could itself come out of a novel. Born in 1950 in a small town near Hanover, she was the third daughter in an impoverished middle-class family. Her sisters are 12 and 14 years older, and Biermann was unplanned. Her father was delighted, her mother appalled, and three times tried to abort the pregnancy.

Does she hate her mother? "Not at all." Such equanimity defies belief, but Biermann brushes this aside. "I learned of this when I was in my teens, at the time of the beginning of the feminist movement, and abortion was the thing we all marched for. So I understood." But mother and daughter were not close, even though Biermann's father died while she was very young: "I think I was a disturbance in her life."

The years Biermann spent as a prostitute influence her novels, which are based in the seedy, crime-ridden underworld of Berlin. In Violetta, the first of her novels to be published in Britain, the bad guys include the police and the media; the moral universe is defined by prostitutes, used, as the author says "like a Greek chorus".

Indeed, Biermann gives one of the prostitutes a speech that defines hooking as a moral and political act that appeals to both capital and labour. "Applied market economy, that's what whores know all about. But our trade is also socialism-compatible — we trade with our own property, not other people's goods." Not quite what Charles Swain had in mind about the dignity of labour, but typical of Biermann's quirky humour throughout the book.

Biermann left prostitution because, she says: "It was so boring. At first I met men from lives I would never have known before, but after five years it was not so interesting." In 1986 she started writing fiction.

Biermann's dystopian vision of modern society made crime-writing the obvious choice. "Violence and corruption are all around us, so what do you write? Crime novels, of course." But making the bad guys pay does not interest her. "It's very old-fashioned — classical British crime fiction."

She now lives a respectable middle-class life with her cat and her third husband. "I'm not Barbara Hutton or Liz Taylor," she says, laughing. "It just took a while to find the right man."

Violetta is published by Serpent's Tail at £8.99

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In the hall of mirrors

Ian Sansom

Christopher Isherwood Diaries: Volume One (1939-1960)
ed Katherine Bucknell
Methuen 1,048pp £25

W*H AUDEN*, Louis MacNeice, Stephen Spender, Christopher Isherwood, C Day Lewis. The brat-pack of their day. A jumped-up bunch of back-slapping, self-promoting, self-obsessed pretenders, or a group of brilliant and like-minded friends and associates who collectively expressed the hopes and anxieties of a troubled age — according to your point of view.

They're all dead now, of course. But they are still considered by many to have been the great writers of the 1930s. Yet in truth most of them produced their best work after the thirties, as they grew old and tired of themselves. Isherwood alone produced his greatest work during the thirties — Mr Norris Changes Trains (1935), Lions And Shadows (1938), Goodbye To Berlin (1939) — and yet more than any of the others he deserves to be regarded as a quintessentially modern writer, a writer with whom we can identify, a writer whose life was his work, and vice versa.

The publication of Isherwood's diaries is therefore a major literary event and an essential part of his *oeuvre*. They are the *urtexts* from which he mined the material not just for his memoirs but also for the many novels which he continued to write, despite harsh responses from reviewers (Kingsley Amis described Isherwood's 1954 novel The World In The Evening as "the last sparks of the rocket-burst which tells us that all that is left is the stick").

In Isherwood's world, fact and fiction merged. His novels and stories and memoirs were like halls of reflecting mirrors. The narrating "Christopher" both was and wasn't Isherwood, etc, etc. He simply didn't like to waste anything — everything went into his work, a result perhaps of what he called his "old-maidish tidyness" (Auden described him in a poem as "A cross between a cavalry major and a rather prim landlady"). As he once told Michael Davie, "I don't see much difference between an autobiography and a novel."

This first volume of diaries covers the years 1939 to 1960, and the facts of Isherwood's life during this period are already fairly well known: his move to Hollywood and his meeting Swami Prabhavananda, his subsequent conversion to Hinduism, his pacifism during the war, his work at MGM. Isherwood's method of recycling his material means that there are gobbets and passages and sometimes whole pages from the diaries which the reader will be familiar with from other sources, but there are plenty of nice, new fleshed-out anecdotes and a steady trickle of good hot fresh gossip: Bertrand Russell is described as "that monkey-gland lobster in a woolly, toy-sheep wig", Clifford Odets is "rather a bore" and Carson McCullers "really ought to powder her nose".

One is of course naturally interested in Isherwood's recollections — how, one wonders, after another night's partying with Lauren Bacall or picnicking with Aldous Huxley, did he ever find time to write anything? — but the book is just as significant for detailing for the first time the circumstances of Isherwood's meeting Don Bachardy, the young man who was to become his long-time lover and partner.

F*OR* all these insights and observations, however, there is surprisingly little in the diaries in the way of self-exploration. Isherwood certainly did not lack convictions, but he did lack ideas. He explains, for example, that he was a pacifist during the war because it might have meant killing his German boyfriend Heinz: "Heinz is in the Nazi army. I wouldn't kill Heinz. Therefore I have no right to kill anybody." His notions about religion and politics were almost wholly based on who he met and when. "I have never", he explains, "been able to grasp any idea except through a person." All the socialising and the hanging-out and hob-nobbing really mattered — in a sense, they were all there was, and all there is. We are the company we keep.

The book's editor, Katherine Bucknell, is an American academic living in London, who acts as Isherwood's recording angel, piecing the diaries together and providing scrupulous footnotes and a useful glossary. Isherwood would have appreciated her attention to detail.

This book can be ordered at a special discount price of £20 from Books@The Guardian Weekly

Hurrah for eccentrics

John Mullan

The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman
by Martin Rowson
Picador £15.99

I*F YOU* like Laurence Sterne's Tristram Shandy, you will probably love it; if you love it, you will probably think that it belongs to you. Cartoonist Martin Rowson, who has produced an illustrated version of the most idiosyncratic of novels, himself observes ruefully that "its devotees view it as their own personal property" and will probably think him a trespasser. This "history-book . . . of what passes in a man's own mind", as Tristram, the narrator, describes it, brings to life the logic of human eccentricity. Casting the discerning reader as a fellow eccentric, it has always managed to convince its fans of their singularity, as well as of its own.

And there is the paradox. For Sterne's plotless, mock-learned, endlessly digressive novel — an exception to every rule of story-telling — has always been hugely popular.

At one point in Rowson's journey through the novel, Dr Johnson waddles on to the page from out of a Joshua Reynolds portrait to declare, "Nothing odd will do long. Tristram Shandy did not last." Yet its oddness — its truth to the inconsequentialities of life — is its achievement. "Sport of small accidents", Tristram calls himself, and his "Life" is dedicated to tracing them.

How can the illustrator reproduce this? In part, by following the novel's own visual hints. Preoccupied with the meanings made where words stop, the original is full of pictures: at one remove, in its tongue-in-cheek use of art criticism or its strange freeze-frame descriptions of its characters' contortions; literally, in its diagrams and visual jokes (a black page when a character dies).

Rowson grabs these gratefully, and adds his own pictures of what Tristram asks us to see, like the plans of siege warfare that preoccupy Uncle Toby.

Rowson plunders 18th century art for visual equivalents of Sterne's own parodies and plagiarism. In a parallel to Sterne's flippant way with allusion, he pirates paintings by Gainsborough and Constable, Hogarth prints, contemporary caricatures of Sterne himself.

The visual crowdedness that is Rowson's homage to Sterne's density of allusion and quickness of association will baffle those who do not already know the novel. Although a comic strip, it is not a classic made easy. (It contains its own satirical digression on how Andrew Davies would prettily "adapt" it for the BBC.) Hogarth is the model for this density of reference.

Illustrations are often thick with in-jokes, including what look like nudges to the illustrator's particular friends and foes. But then Sterne was also fond of these — to be decoded by academic commentators centuries later. Hogarth's influence is also appropriate because he was flattered by Sterne into providing two illustrations for the "rhapsodical" novel — his "witty Chissel" naturally adapted to the ludicrous eccentricity of Sterne's characters, and another boost for sales figures.

The facetiousness of Tristram Shandy, most evident in its treatment of grave subjects, opens it to the cartoonist's reductive techniques. What Rowson most tries to catch, from frame to frame, is the original's energy of improvisation as it dashes from thought to thought continually asking us to imagine what can come next.

Having followed Tristram's narration rather closely for the first half of the novel, however, he runs out of breath or invention. Far short of Sterne's last volumes, he ends his version with a flurry of entertaining but perhaps gratuitous 20th century literary caricatures — how Raymond Chandler or Martin Amis would have told Tristram's story.

The excuse is, presumably, that Sterne saw modern fiction coming. The curtailment leaves us with too strong a sense that we have, after all, been reading someone else's reading. However resourceful another interpreter might be, the reader wants his or her own "conversation" with Tristram Shandy. Rowson's self-thwarting cleverness is to remind us of this, and to send us back to the life of Sterne's fiction and his peculiar narrator, "curvetting and frisking it" as he writes with the speed of thought itself. So much of motion is so much of life.

Six of the best for Guardian fiction award

T*HE GUARDIAN* Fiction Award, which is given annually to a new work by a British or Commonwealth novelist, is now in its 31st year.

The six titles in the shortlist are The Insult, by Rupert Thomson (Bloomsbury, £10.99), a deceptive fable set in some bleak East European country. The blind hero's sanity and sightedness are constantly called into question.

Anita And Me, by Meera Syal (Flamingo, £9.99), is a tragicomic first novel about an Indian girlhood in the Black Country. Over the course of a year in the girl's life, Syal traces the development of a corrosive, manipulative friendship and the loss of innocence in the face of village racism.

Asylum (Viking, £16) is Patrick McGrath's fourth novel. Set in 1959, it details the blighted lives of the Raphael family: an ambitious psychiatrist, his wife and young son, and their relationship with the sculptor and wife-murderer Edgar Stark, who is a patient in the asylum.

Reading In The Dark, by Seamus Deane (Cape, £13.99), is a semi-autobiographical narrative of a working-class boy growing up in Derry in the fifties. He suffers a triple haunting — by the consequences of a family secret, by the political enmities of the period, and by the fairies and warriors of Irish legend.

A Perfect Execution, by Tim Binding (Picador, £15.99), follows the story of Jeremiah Bembo, alias Solomon Straw, the most professional of the men who travelled the railways of post-war Britain, carrying out public hangings.

The Cast Iron Shore, by Linda Grant (Picador, £15.99), is the story of Sybil Rose, born in 1924 in Liverpool to a Jewish furrier and his German, gentile wife.

The winner of the £3,000 prize will be announced in December.

If you would like to order any shortlisted books at a £2 discount, contact Books@The Guardian Weekly

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Thrillers

Chris Petit

Black Light, by Stephen Hunter (Century, £15.99)

T*HE* shooting of an Arkansas state trooper in the 1950s, an apparently open-and-shut case, is dug up by a young journalist and the trooper's initially reluctant son, a laconic ex-sniper like his father. A telescopic plot opens up to reveal a series of cover-ups touching on the civil rights movement, local corruption, bad blood, old and new America, its stubbornness and slickness. Black Light is distinguished by its ambition — it's The Brothers Karamazov set over two generations, with Faulknerian substrata. It also moves like an express train, propelled by sure-footed plotting.

The Intruder, by Peter Brauner (Fourth Estate, £10)

T*HIS* thriller takes a safe middle-class urban family and twists it until everything buckles. First a subway train driver falls through the net, losing job, family and friends, ending up a homeless crack addict in the rat-infested tunnels of New York. When he starts stalking a lawyer's wife, the lawyer, reduced to believable desperation, takes the law into his own hands, only to find himself both nailed in a frame and in free-fall. This is a sweaty step-by-step walk into a nightmare. That everyone is seen to have their reasons lends it an uncomfortable air of ghastly inevitability.

The Last Don, by Mario Puzo (Heinemann, £15.99)

P*ASTA AL PUZO* is now a warmed over dish of familiar ingredients: Borgia-like cruelty, Machiavellian subtlety and solid American business know-how. Puzo, like Richard Condon, identifies organised crime as integral to the American way, but more for purposes of nostalgia than satire. What are these extended families if not the last repository of traditional values?

The Illegal, by Mark Urban (Headline, £16.99)

T*HIS* BBC man writes a more downbeat thriller than colleagues Esler and Sebastian; no foreign affairs but a well-researched tale of domestic cover-up with international ramifications. A buried paedophile case resurfaces and a CID copper's off-duty investigation takes him into the murky areas of the secret state; a life-risking excursion, but seen to be preferable to a trip to Ikea. This first novel sometimes reads like a superior TV-movie-in-waiting, but has a reporter's nose for inside dope, how the different authorities really work and how dirty laundry gets lost.

Trading Reality, by Michael Ridpath (Heinemann, £15.99)

F*OR* his first novel, Free To Trade, venture capitalist Ridpath bought a "how-to" manual and hit the jackpot. He has stuck to the lessons he learned and basically does money — City high-jinks, tacked on to an iffy murder story and a more interesting one about virtual reality. Mild escapism is offered by a world of Karens and Rachels, Scottish tourist-board locations and bogymen in the form of loony lefties. Easy to pick holes, but Ridpath does have the read-on factor that sets bestsellers apart.

A walk across Europe's spine

Michael Asher

Clear Waters Rising
by Nicholas Crane
Viking 374pp £18

S*OME* time before Nick Crane began his magnificent 6,000-mile trek across the mountains of Europe from Cape Finisterre to Istanbul, he bought an old MG sports car. The vehicle was the perfect apothegm for Crane's view of himself: a good solid piece of British engineering from a golden age ("I was born into a land of heroes"): not too ostentatious, but expressing a touch of class: 40-odd years old, but still sporty, and able to hold its own with the best.

The image continues through Crane's book in which he appears as the eccentric wandering Englishman — complete with such icons of Englishness as "Herbert Johnson's travelling trilby" and an umbrella called Che Chova ("What rain?") — and delightedly reports the query of a passing Spaniard: "Why do the British always have to be different?"

Crane might have countered that today the British are not as different from their fellow European citizens as they perhaps appeared in the early 1930s — that Indian summer of the world's colonial empires — when the 18-year-old Paddy Leigh-Fermor made his celebrated trek from the Hook of Holland to Constantinople, as "a pilgrim or a palmer, an errant scholar, a broken knight". Though Crane's journey was inspired by Leigh-Fermor's, the continent it revealed was not the Ruritanian, Hergé-esque landscape of his predecessor — a fact which he concedes somewhat testily when, in Romania, the traditional fair anticipated as a pageant of "peasants wearing embroidered heirlooms, roving flautists and a bear-tamer or two" proves closer to a British car-boot sale.

Crane's idea of hiking through the vast S-shaped curve of mountains which divides the continent — the Cantabrian Sierras, the Pyrenees, the Cevennes, the Alps, the Carpathians and the Balkan Ranges — was original and exciting. It appears, however, to have been based — as he himself puts it — "to some extent on self-delusion". Mountains have always evoked the eternal in the cultures which have dwelt around them, and to Crane these ranges represented a refuge of Europe's old ways, and the continent's "last wilderness": he meets his misconception head-on when the bear that chases him at one stage turns out to have been liberated from a zoo.

It must also be acknowledged that Crane himself is more a product of the frenetic urban era than he might care to admit — not so much Fermor's "errant scholar" as a highly professional, seasoned and well-organised post-modern traveller with a distinctly athletic bent, whose journey across Europe's spine of mountains was less a search for the "geographical logic and ethnological possibilities" than an exercise in self-discipline and an experiment in being alone.

This is not to say that Clear Waters Rising lacks colour; on the contrary, the narrative is a string of richly illuminating pearls made up of encounters with shepherds, pilgrims, cheese-makers, bagpipe-players, bear-hunters — and bears — set against superbly evocative descriptions of the landscape, and salted with historical and cultural allusions which are recounted with polish and flair.

Crane is interested in everything from the design of farm-carts to ecclesiastical history and traditional musical instruments. Yet no matter how accomplished, such descriptions always remain subordinate to the sheer imperative of the journey — not so much Fermor's expressed wish to "think, write, stay or move at my own speed" as Jack Kerouac's exhortation to the beat generation "Man, you gotta go!" And go he did. Crane's walk of some 6,000 miles in just over 16 months, carrying his own equipment and without the support of mobile phones or four-wheel-drive vehicles, was a true adventure. Clear Waters Rising is a marvellous record of that remarkable journey, and an alluring exposition of a landscape which — while it may not reflect the unchanging world which the author hoped for — continues through his eyes to inspire us with fascination and awe.

Experimental people

Susie Boyt

Heading Inland
by Nicola Barker
Faber 160pp £8.99

T*HIRTY-YEAR-OLD* Barker has made a considerable name for herself as chronicler of the disaffected youth (and others) of North London — what you might call that Finsbury Park feeling — but her writing doesn't feel at all metropolitan or inward-looking. She has lots to say to anyone in post-Thatcherite Britain.

This fourth book (following hard on the heels of a volume of short stories and two novels) is another extremely accomplished collection of short stories. The writing in it is sharp, intricate and stylish. The settings are unusually imaginative and original.

A woman in sheltered housing whose medication has just been reduced becomes obsessed with the homeless man who makes dawn raids on their rubbish bins; a young girl on the morning of her wedding, puffed up by the power of her situation, cannot resist testing out how vile her family will allow her to be; a new French tumbler, suffering from a stammer, joins an English circus; a recently separated woman strikes up an unconventional romance with the 320-pound octogenarian she meets at the ballet.

The collection as a whole has a certain kind of grandness; nothing is too weird or too ordinary for Nicola Barker. You never feel she is writing to please anyone, or would be prepared to make any compromises — and this gives her work a strong note of authenticity. On two occasions, I had to stop reading because I felt sick at the disgusting things she was describing, and yet sometimes when she speaks about commonplace things she gives them a weight that can render them almost sublime.

Barker's stories are experimental in the best sense of the word, putting together odd combinations of people and situations to see what happens and then scrutinising the results. Often her stories seem to feature people in moments of crisis



Nicola Barker: nothing is too weird or too ordinary for her

on the edge of themselves or society, and this can give them the quality of dream-time or of fantasy. In this respect they seem extremely literary, for although they often have extraordinary and wild things at their hearts, they still have much to tell us about the way we live our lives.

One of my favourite stories is "Popping Corn", a two-page meditation on breast size by a mother and her daughter sitting on a bus, probably speaking at the tops of their voices. At first the two women are like a comedy act, the young girl Mandy voicing her desire for bosoms that could give her a leg up to a glamorous career — cocktail waitress, topless model, Saint Tropez sun worshipper —and her mother tartly responding "And get cancer".

As Barker's story unfolds, however, we are given little snippets of family myth and history of such an intimate nature that they lend the story a surprising intensity. She builds on this intensity, using both humour and fantasy so the relationship of Mandy to her mother, Mandy to her breasts, and Mandy (and her breasts) to the rest of the world run along in parallel; closing in a comic denouement of great joy. By the end of the story, something rare and acute about adolescence has been glimpsed as both excitement at, and withdrawal from, the prospect of full adult life are evoked in equal measure.

Power of the flower

David Bellamy

Flora Britannica: The Definitive Guide to Wild Flowers, Plants and Trees
by Richard Mabey
Sinclair Stevenson 480pp £30

The Penguin Book of Garden Writing
edited by David Wheeler
Viking 382pp £20

T*HOUGH* superb, Richard Mabey's Flora Britannica cannot claim to be the definitive contemporary flora, nor the best guide to the relationship between the plants, people and landscapes of "this scepter'd isle". The former is Clive Stace's New Flora Of The British Isles; the latter The History Of The Countryside by Oliver Rackham, a scholar if ever there was one. The only hype with which I can agree is that it is a sort of Domesday Book, for if we don't all get off our complacent backsides and work with the many bodies which campaign for our wildflowers and wildlife, the next, really definitive work on Britain's flora will be a much slimmer volume.

The editor and his nationwide team of correspondents offer a fascinating insight into the not-so-secret world of plants. This is a celebration, crafted as only Richard Mabey could, for he is that rare combination of a journalist and a romantic.

He also has a great joy of, and way with, words: Easter-Mun Jiands, who else would have bothered with that? A local name for once common bistort. A name that makes both your mind and mouth water for more, and so it should for *Persicaria bistorta* is the key ingredient of dock pudding, enjoyed at Eastertide over the centuries and celebrated since 1971 with a world championship held, where else, but at Mytholmroyd. First of the Easter dishes, last of the summer wine.

Folklore is not just something from the past — it is living and being celebrated in every part of this once floriferous realm.

Flora Britannica is a celebration of plants, places and people, especially those who each year freely give millions of working days in the service of our wild plants and rural places, members of campaigning bodies like Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, the National Trust, Common Ground and others who do their best to keep what little is left of our native flora and the traditions that maintain them safe. Mabey has done a fine job of editing the delights and desires of the thousands of folk from town and country who answered his appeal for information, so proving that they still delight in things natural.

With David Wheeler's book I can find no fault. Garden writing is a celebration of that other army of workers whose passion for and purpose in life revolves around the plant kingdom.

In 1969 Christopher Falconer wrote: "I went to [his] Lordship's when I was 14 and stayed for 14 years. There were seven gardeners and goodness knows how many servants in the house. It was a frightening experience for a boy . . . there aren't many gardeners of my calibre left. I am a young man who has got caught in old ways. I am 39 and I am a Victorian gardener, and this is why the world is strange to me."

Every page of both these books opens windows on to the past, the present and the future of *Homo sapiens*, the only product of evolution that recognises that without plants there can be no sentient life on Earth. This is perhaps our last chance to turn the tide of destruction of the natural world upon which we all depend.

Rugby Union International: Scotland 19 Australia 29

Wallabies stay one jump ahead

Robert Armstrong at Murrayfield

STONES were heard crashing loudly in glasshouses when the Australian coach Greg Smith condemned the mediocre quality of a Test in which the Wallabies ran out comfortable winners because they focused on plain old-fashioned set-piece rugby.

Smith took the referee Patrick Thomas to task for allegedly destroying the momentum of both sides, yet Australia succeeded precisely because they destroyed the well-meaning if naive attempts of the Scots to develop continuity.

No doubt Smith was seeking a scapegoat on which to offload the strictly limited tactics of his own streetwise team, which bore a strong stylistic resemblance to the England of the early nineties.

Little wonder, therefore, that the Scottish coach Richie Dixon declared afterwards that the problems his players failed to solve, in the key areas of winning and keeping possession, were similar to those set by England every time they come to Murrayfield.

Smith may have had a point when he complained, "It's very difficult to present a marketable product if the referee keeps stopping play," after carefully congratulating Scotland on the spirit of enterprise shown by their ambitious backs. Nevertheless the referee, pedantic as he was, merely applied the laws, evenly distributing 28 penalties and several free-kicks in response to many acts of indiscipline by both sides.

The bleak truth is that the 1996 Wallabies stand light years behind their distinguished predecessors in terms of development, even though they do have accomplished ball players. Australia's back-to-basics approach was dictated partly by an urgent need to develop a winning streak after three defeats in their previous eight Tests, partly by the knowledge that they had the big forwards to make it work.

Scotland, outgunned in the line-out and under pressure in the scrums, were like a lively bird caught in wire mesh, twisting and turning with every scrap of possession in a vain endeavour to find open space.

The superbly inventive Townsend set up two tries and came close to springing the Australian trap on several occasions but his unique gifts were not so effective in midfield as they might have been at fly-half, where Chalmers was no more than efficient.

Given the amount of time the Scots spent on the back foot, it was a situation that cried out for a salvage expert capable of making the most of scrappy ball and setting the Wallabies unexpected posers. Scotland could ill-afford the absence of the injured Wainwright from the back row, where Peters and the new cap Wallace were unable to impose lasting authority after a promising start.

Australia, who have not lost to Scotland for 14 years, were admirably served by the pace and athleticism of their captain and lock Eales, who was invariably on hand to tighten up a drive down the flanks or provide a timely link with the backs. Manu's aggression around the fringes often scattered the Scots, as did the storming drives of the props Harry and Blades.

Indeed, had the Australian scrum-half Payne cleared the ball from the rucks with greater urgency, the frisky three-quarters Herbert, Howard and Roff might have given the Scottish defence a caning. However, even the dynamic fly-half Knox was clearly under orders not to take risks and to put in a generous amount of percentage kicking. The bold Burke, who kicked 19 points, needed a more colourful stage to show why he is the best full-back Down Under.

Still, the four tries, evenly shared, were worth the attention of a crowd of 51,000.

Carling kept on board as De Glanville takes helm

Robert Armstrong

WILL CARLING has confounded expectations by keeping his place in Jack Rowell's England team. He will win his 67th cap in a midfield partnership with the new captain Phil de Glanville against Italy at Twickenham on November 23. Carling's selection means there is no place for his long-serving England partner Jeremy Guscott, who has been in outstanding form with Bath.

Carling, who resigned as captain in March, is the only survivor from an old guard that included Dean Richards, Rory Underwood and Guscott. "The ramifications of making Phil captain were obvious but I kept an open mind, and when I came to training I was pleasantly surprised," said Carling. "But I'm under no illusion about what it will take to stay there."

Rowell said he had no objection to Carling, at 30 the oldest player in the team, playing at fly-half for Harlequins. "If that's how Will refreshes his mind and keeps himself stimulated, so be it."

Rowell, the former Bath coach, has included five Bath backs in his squad of 21. The potential bonus is attractive provided the pack generates quick clean ball.

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De Glanville: looking forward to international challenge

Bristol lock Shaw will bring more atheticism to the pack than Garath Archer, who did a good job for England in his two games last March.

The appointment of the 28-year-old De Glanville, ahead of strong candidates such as Lawrence Dallaglio, Jason Leonard, Ben Clarke and Tim Rodber was announced last week. Although his appointment is initially for one season, Rowell made it clear that, subject to fitness and form, he expected the Bath captain to lead England into the 1999 World Cup.

Head first for both club and country

OBITUARY
Tommy Lawton

TOMMY LAWTON, who has died aged 77, has long been regarded as one of the finest centre-forwards to have played for England, scoring 22 goals in 23 games. Had he been operative now he would have earned, and been transferred for, millions. Instead he played for the relative pittance earned by the professionals of his time, and in his declining years even found himself hauled into court on charges of petty fraud: a pitiful anti-climax to a remarkable career.

Lawton, like Nat Lofthouse after him, was born in Bolton and attended Castle Hill School. If Lofthouse was playing wartime football for Bolton at 15, Lawton was leading the Burnley attack in the Football League at 16. Why didn't he join Bolton Wanderers? He was, after all, the outstanding schoolboy footballer in the town, even if he never won a schoolboy cap for England.



Air apparent: Lawton replaced Dixie Dean at Everton

Walter Rowley, then Bolton's coach, did try to sign him as an amateur, after a spell when he had trained two nights a week at Burnden Park. But their concurrent offers, of ten shillings a week for a clerk's job, or seven and six as a butcher's roundsman, were unattractive.

In May, 1935, the 15-year-old Lawton joined Burnley. He was coached by a hard taskmaster in Ray Bennion, who made him endlessly practise his shooting and his heading, running round the field to pivot and strike all the Bs in the advertisement BURNLEY'S BEER IS BEST.

On March 28, 1936, aged only 16, Lawton made his League debut for Burnley in the Second Division against Doncaster Rovers. It was a draw. In his second game, at Swansea, he scored twice, the first with one of those typical, towering headers. It used to be said of Lawton, and there has even been scientific evidence to suggest it was more than legend, that he could actually hang in the air before a header.

Working hard under Bennion, he improved his left foot until it was almost as powerful a weapon as his right. But though he scored infinite goals with either foot, it was for his heading ability that he was always especially renowned.

Five foot 11 and powerfully built, Lawton began the following season for Burnley with a burst of goals, three of them in a single game against Tottenham.

On the last day of 1936, emissaries from Everton arrived and he was duly taken on to the Goodison Park ground staff.



Tommy Lawton . . . a remarkable career PHOTOGRAPH: CRAIG EASTON

There the plan plainly was that he should take over from the veteran Dixie Dean, a fabulous header of the ball and scorer of 60 First Division goals in the 1927/8 season. When the newly-arrived Lawton took the tram to Goodison, its conductor recognised him and told him: "You'll never be as good as Dean!" But Dean was benign. "Youngster," he said, the moment he saw Lawton, "you've come here to take my place. Anything I can do for you, I will."

He won his first cap for England as a 19-year-old at Cardiff against Wales in October, 1938. Lawton did score from a penalty; but England were beaten 4-2.

When war came Lawton, like so many British professional footballers, was allocated to the Army Physical Training Corps at Aldershot. There he played as a guest for the little local club, which was able to deploy a galaxy of stars such as Wolverhampton Wanderer's Stanley Cullis and Lawton's two Everton colleagues, the England wing-halves Cliff Britton and Joe Mercer.

Lawton did not stay with Everton, then a club frequently at odds with its stars. A dispute led to Lawton being the subject of a surprise transfer to Chelsea in the autumn of 1945, for what was then the huge sum of £11,500.

Almost at once he found himself leading the attack, and scoring, in a remarkable 3-3 draw at Stamford Bridge against the legendary Moscow Dynamo touring side.

When first-class football resumed, Lawton scored 26 First Division goals for Chelsea in only 34 games. He continued to play for England, and scored twice for Britain versus Europe. But he was still a restless figure and demanded a transfer; to general astonishment he moved to Third Division Notts County, for a new record fee of £20,000.

Meanwhile he had scored four times the previous May in a sensational 10-0 win against Portugal in Lisbon, and he would score one of England's goals in a notable 4-0 win over Italy in Turin in May, 1948.

Scoring freely, Lawton stayed with Notts County until the 1951/52 season, taking them up to Division Two in 1949/50 with 31 goals in 37 games. He left Nottingham, where he'd been involved with a firm selling typewriters, to become player manager of Brentford in Division Two. Two seasons later he was brought back to the First Division by Arsenal, where he made 35 appearances and scored 13 goals.

For a while he was player manager of the non-League club Kettering. Next he went back to manage Notts County. But management was never really his forte, and his subsequent years in Nottingham were star-crossed ones, though he did, eventually, write with some success for the local paper.

Brian Glanville

Tommy Lawton, footballer, born October 6, 1919; died November 6, 1996

Football World Cup European qualifying Group Two: Georgia 0 England 2

Hoddle plays the smother superior

David Lacey in Tbilisi

THE talents of Glenn Hoddle seem boundless. As a player he was an acknowledged master of the footballing arts, although few would have given him a degree in applied physics. As England coach, having already established himself as psychologist and confessor, he is now a qualified anaesthetist.

The surgery in Tbilisi last Saturday was brief. Goals from Teddy Sheringham, after 14 minutes, and Les Ferdinand, after 36, put England's third World Cup qualifier under Hoddle beyond Georgia's reach and laid the groundwork for a victory — accomplished without Shearer — which has left them top of Group Two with nine points, three more than Italy.

Yet the win owed less to the scalpel than the ether. Having gone two up, England sent almost everyone to sleep for the best part of an hour. As entertainment it compared unfavourably with a post-office queue, but in the context of what was required, especially after the flawed 2-1 win over Poland at Wembley a month earlier, it was right. Qualifying competitions impose their own disciplines and no points are awarded for artistic impression.

Hoddle knew that, given half a chance, Georgia would have run his defenders ragged, much as they had done against Italy after half-time in Perugia, when only the goalkeeping of Toldo preserved the Italians' 1-0 lead. So he set out to deny England's opponents possession in midfield, and time and space near goal.

That this mission was accomplished so successfully was due principally to the efforts of a player whose inclusion in the squad, let alone the team, had been the subject for serious debate. On his previous international appearance he had been seen to aim a gratuitous kick at an opponent, and since then he had been involved in an unseemly public brawl with a partner.

In Tbilisi, however, David Batty was the epitome of restraint and good judgment. He and Ince were also there to provide a platform for whatever inspiration Gascoigne could provide five days after a public apology for hitting his wife and amid growing evidence that he no longer has the stamina for matches at this level. In Tbilisi Gascoigne featured in the build-ups to both goals and crafted his instincts as an individualist to the needs of the team.

Enfant terrible . . . Paul Gascoigne battles for the ball with Georgia's Nugzar Lobjanidze PHOTOGRAPH: SHAKH AIVAZOV

With Campbell impressive at the back in his first full international, Beckham industrious and perceptive as a right wing-back, and Adams's authority on the field undiminished by his problems with alcohol off it, Hoddle was entitled to be delighted. He has now matched Bobby Robson's 1984 achievement of winning his first three World Cup qualifiers.

Results and tables, page 40

Germany 1 N Ireland 1

Hamilton finds right balance

Michael Walker in Nuremberg

IF Darren Anderton's shot had not come back off Andreas Köpke's post at Wembley in June but instead had settled in the back of the net, England would have won Euro 96.

Imagine then that England had drawn Northern Ireland in their World Cup qualifying group and that the first game back at Wembley was against Bryan Hamilton's collection of reserve-team journeymen.

Given that scenario and you get a sense of the triumphant expectation that greeted Germany in the Frankenstadion last Saturday.

But then Northern Ireland, with only a home defeat and a draw to their name, not only held out for that important first half-hour but also went on to score.

Admittedly Andreas Möller equalised immediately, thereby averting an upset of Mike Tyson-like proportions, but the Irish showed unbending resilience to register a famous draw.

Northern Ireland deserve huge admiration for their persistence in playing their way out of pressure situations. And this was pressure. At times the Germans may have lacked ingenuity but six on-target strikes in the opening 20 minutes, nine corners in the final quarter of an hour, are an indication of their passages of control.

Yet even in the late stages the Irish declined to hoof the ball away gratefully when a better option was to find Neil Lennon or Michael Hughes foraging away beyond the German midfield, or Iain Dowie striving manfully and successfully alone up front.

That trio and Ian Nolan were the only ones in the starting line-up playing regularly in the Premiership. For players like Steve Morrow at Arsenal and Colin Hill at Leicester, first-team football is a rarity, while the rest are not even big names in the Nationwide League.

But as a team, they get the balance right. Strangely, however, Northern Ireland seem capable only of doing this away from home. Perhaps it has something to do with atmosphere. That was not a problem here.

Forty thousand Germans sat stunned as Thomas Strunz's attempted clearance fell at the left foot of Gerry Taggart whose instant lash whipped past Köpke. It was a finish of power and precision, and the Bolton captain's sixth goal for Northern Ireland.

The euphoric mood lasted about 90 seconds. Möller's one-two with Bobic ended with the ball whistling past Tommy Wright. It had to be some shot to beat a goalkeeper having one of those nights in what was his first international for over two years. Wright managed to get fingers, fists and feet to everything.

● Wales suffered their worst international defeat in a competitive game when they lost 7-1 to Holland in Eindhoven. Among the scorers for the Dutch was Arsenal's Dennis Bergkamp, who netted a hat-trick.

Group Four Scotland 1 Sweden 0

Scots conjure up a victory

Patrick Glenn at Ibrox Park

SCOTLAND appear to have mastered the black art of taking a roasting without being burned. The 2,000 or so Swedes who formed part of a 46,738 capacity crowd left with the conviction that sorcery was at work against a visiting team who generally outplayed the Scots and missed enough scoring chances to have won an entire series of World Cup qualifiers.

The concept of luck usually has no place in the pragmatic business of soccer, but those who witnessed a victory that takes Craig Brown's side to the top of Group Four would be entitled to argue with that observation.

The idea that the Swedes had been not so much in decline as unfortunate since finishing third in the 1994 World Cup finals had been circulating freely before Sunday's game. Brown himself said they had virtually overrun Austria in Stockholm last month and lost 1-0, including among their woes a missed penalty by Kennet Andersson.

The towering Bologna striker replaced the injured Dahlin after only 16 minutes and spent the remaining 74 demonstrating how he has managed not to score a single goal for his club this season.

By way of contrast, John McGinlay scored with the only genuine chance the Scots created in the entire match. Only nine minutes had gone when Boyd played the ball in from the left and Jackson's dummy allowed it to run towards the penalty area. McGinlay, whose hot streak at Bolton in recent months made him a good choice for his country, took it in his stride, held off Bjorklund as he moved to the right and sent a low drive from 12 yards to the right of Ravelli.

The Swedish coach, Tommy Svensson, changed his normal 4-4-2 formation to a 4-5-1 to ensure that the Scots' wide players McNamara and Tosh McKinlay would be clamped. Thern, Zetterberg and Schwarz proceeded to dominate the heart of the midfield and make menacing progress towards Leighton.

Once in the vicinity, however, they found a veteran goalkeeper in the form of a twentysomething, leaping to make saves, sprinting to block at forwards' feet and springing to punch or hold the crosses and corners that Blomqvist and Alexandersson hurled towards him with alarming regularity.

After the game the 38-year-old Leighton revealed that he had been on the point of giving up international soccer and had changed his mind only after a family conference.

The Scots will surely play better when some injured players return. But they are unlikely ever to match such a terrific result to such a poor performance.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Coppell quits City

IT took Manchester City chairman Francis Lee seven weeks to find a new manager for his club, and it took the new man, Steve Coppell, just 33 days at Maine Road to discover the job was not for him.

The 41-year-old Coppell, City's eighth manager in a decade, has left on medical grounds. At a hastily convened press conference, he said: "Since my appointment this has completely overwhelmed me to such an extent that I cannot function in the job the way I would like to. This is the hardest thing I have ever had to do, and I can only say the decision I have made is an honest one and in the best interests of the club and myself."

As City manager Coppell signed Eddie McGoldrick from Arsenal for £300,000 and took Simon Rodger on loan from Crystal Palace but was unable to turn things round for the First Division club, achieving only two wins in his six-game stint.

Lee has been so shaken by the resignation that he will not look for a new manager immediately. Instead, he has installed Phil Neal, Coppell's assistant, in the post.

Another manager in the headlines was Ron Atkinson of Coventry City. He ended 25 years in management by becoming the Midlands club's director of football, leaving his No 2 Gordon Strachan to take over as manager.

CHELSEA have signed Italian international Gianfranco Zola from Parma for a fee of £4.5 million. He will be the third Italian to move to Stamford Bridge under manager Ruud Gullitt. Zola will join compatriots Gianluca Vialli and Roberto di Matteo. His four-year deal is set to net him around £25,000 a week. The clubs will also play two friendlies, the first on November 27, with the return next summer.

SCOTLAND have been ordered by Fifa to play Estonia, who failed to turn up for their World Cup tie in Tallinn on October 9 after a mix-up over timing. Scotland had believed they would be awarded a 3-0 victory, but the game's governing body ruled that the tie must be played before March 16. Scotland coach Craig Brown reacted philosophically: "It is winning matches that qualifies you in the World Cup. We didn't want handouts."

STAN COLLYMORE has been fined £20,000 by Liverpool — the largest financial penalty ever imposed on a player — after he failed to turn up to play for the reserve team last week. Anfield's wayward striker, for whom Liverpool manager Roy Evans paid Nottingham Forest £8.5 million 15 months ago, then a British record transfer fee, has also been warned over his future conduct.

DAVID BUSST of Coventry City, who suffered a compound fracture of the right leg during a match at Old Trafford in April, has retired from the game. The 29-year-old has undergone 14 operations since the horrific accident. Last week he was told by a specialist that he would not be able to play again at any level.

ED GIDDINS hopes to sign for a new county this week despite losing his appeal against a 19-month drugs ban. The former Sussex fast bowler cannot play first-class cricket until April 1998, but several counties have shown in interest in him. "I've boiled it down to a few choices," said the 25-year-old, who tested positive for cocaine last season. "I must take my punishment and come back a stronger person." Durham meanwhile have signed the 30-year-old Lancashire player Nick Speak on a three-year contract.

MICHAEL SCHUMACHER of Germany has extended his present contract with Ferrari for a further two years after next season at a fee believed to be $82 million. The twice Formula One world champion looks set to pass the $130 million mark with the Italian team in 1999 — the year he turns 30.

SCOTLAND'S snooker dream team of Stephen Hendry, John Higgins and Alan McManus won the World Cup with a 10-7 victory over the Republic of Ireland in Bangkok.

Rugby Union International: Scotland 19 Australia 29

Wallabies stay one jump ahead

Robert Armstrong
at Murrayfield

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De Glanville: looking forward to international challenge

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For a while he was player manager of the non-League club Kettering. Next he went back to manage Notts County. But management was never really his forte, and his subsequent years in Nottingham were star-crossed ones, though he did, eventually, write with some success for the local paper.

Brian Glanville

Tommy Lawton, footballer, born October 6, 1919; died November 6, 1996



Air apparent: Lawton replaced Dixie Dean at Everton

Tommy Lawton . . . a remarkable career PHOTOGRAPH: CRAIG EASTON

Football World Cup European qualifying Group Two: Georgia 0 England 2

Hoddle plays the smother superior

David Lacey in Tbilisi

THE talents of Glenn Hoddle seem boundless. As a player he was an acknowledged master of the footballing arts, although few would have given him a degree in applied physics. As England coach, having already established himself as psychologist and confessor, he is now a qualified anaesthetist.

The surgery in Tbilisi last Saturday was brief. Goals from Teddy Sheringham, after 14 minutes, and Les Ferdinand, after 36, put England's third World Cup qualifier under Hoddle beyond Georgia's reach and laid the groundwork for a victory — accomplished without Shearer — which has left them top of Group Two with nine points, three more than Italy.

Yet the win owed less to the scalpel than the ether. Having gone two up, England sent almost everyone to sleep for the best part of an hour. As entertainment it compared unfavourably with a post-office queue, but in the context of what was required, especially after the flawed 2-1 win over Poland at Wembley a month earlier, it was right. Qualifying competitions impose their own disciplines and no points are awarded for artistic impression.

Hoddle knew that, given half a chance, Georgia would have run his defenders ragged, much as they had done against Italy after half-time in Perugia, when only the goalkeeping of Toldo preserved the Italians' 1-0 lead. So he set out to deny England's opponents possession in midfield, and time and space near goal.

That this mission was accomplished so successfully was due principally to the efforts of a player whose inclusion in the squad, let alone the team, had been the subject for serious debate. On his previous international appearance he had been seen to aim a gratuitous kick at an opponent, and since then he had been involved in an unseemly public brawl with a partner.

In Tbilisi, however, David Batty was the epitome of restraint and good judgment. He and Ince were also there to provide a platform for whatever inspiration Gascoigne could provide five days after a public apology for hitting his wife and amid growing evidence that he no longer has the stamina for matches at this level. In Tbilisi Gascoigne featured in the build-ups to both goals and crafted his instincts as an individualist to the needs of the team.

With Campbell impressive at the back in his first full international, Beckham industrious and perceptive as a right wing-back, and Adams's authority on the field undiminished by his problems with alcohol off it, Hoddle was entitled to be delighted. He has now matched Bobby Robson's 1984 achievement of winning his first three World Cup qualifiers.

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Enfant terrible . . . Paul Gascoigne battles for the ball with Georgia's Nugzar Lobjanidze PHOTOGRAPH: SHAKH AIVAZOV

Group Four Scotland 1 Sweden 0

Scots conjure up a victory

Patrick Glenn at Ibrox Park

SCOTLAND appear to have mastered the black art of taking a roasting without being burned. The 2,000 or so Swedes who formed part of a 46,738 capacity crowd left with the conviction that sorcery was at work against a visiting team who generally outplayed the Scots and missed enough scoring chances to have won an entire series of World Cup qualifiers.

The concept of luck usually has no place in the pragmatic business of soccer, but those who witnessed a victory that takes Craig Brown's side to the top of Group Four would be entitled to argue with that observation.

The idea that the Swedes had been not so much in decline as unfortunate since finishing third in the 1994 World Cup finals had been circulating freely before Sunday's game. Brown himself said they had virtually overrun Austria in Stockholm last month and lost 1-0, including among their woes a missed penalty by Kennet Andersson.

The towering Bologna striker replaced the injured Dahlin after only 16 minutes and spent the remaining 74 demonstrating how he has managed not to score a single goal for his club this season.

By way of contrast, John McGinlay scored with the only genuine chance the Scots created in the entire match. Only nine minutes had gone when Boyd played the ball in from the left and Jackson's dummy allowed it to run towards the penalty area. McGinlay, whose hot streak at Bolton in recent months made him a good choice for his country, took it in his stride, held off Bjorklund as he moved to the right and sent a low drive from 12 yards to the right of Ravelli.

The Swedish coach, Tommy Svensson, changed his normal 4-4-2 formation to a 4-5-1 to ensure that the Scots' wide players McNamara and Tosh McKinlay would be clamped. Thern, Zetterberg and Schwarz proceeded to dominate the heart of the midfield and make menacing progress towards Leighton.

Once in the vicinity, however, they found a veteran goalkeeper in the form of a twentysomething, leaping to make saves, sprinting to block at forwards' feet and springing to punch or hold the crosses and corners that Blomqvist and Alexandersson hurled towards him with alarming regularity.

After the game the 38-year-old Leighton revealed that he had been on the point of giving up international soccer and had changed his mind only after a family conference.

The Scots will surely play better when some injured players return. But they are unlikely ever to match such a terrific result to such a poor performance.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Coppell quits City

IT took Manchester City chairman Francis Lee seven weeks to find a new manager for his club, and it took the new man, Steve Coppell, just 33 days at Maine Road to discover the job was not for him.

The 41-year-old Coppell, City's eighth manager in a decade, has left on medical grounds. At a hastily convened press conference, he said: "Since my appointment this has completely overwhelmed me to such an extent that I cannot function in the job the way I would like to. This is the hardest thing I have ever had to do, and I can only say the decision I have made is an honest one and in the best interests of the club and myself."

As City manager Coppell signed Eddie McGoldrick from Arsenal for £300,000 and took Simon Rodger on loan from Crystal Palace but was unable to turn things round for the First Division club, achieving only two wins in his six-game stint.

Lee has been so shaken by the resignation that he will not look for a new manager immediately. Instead, he has installed Phil Neal, Coppell's assistant, in the post.

Another manager in the headlines was Ron Atkinson of Coventry City. He ended 25 years in management by becoming the Midlands club's director of football, leaving his No 2 Gordon Strachan to take over as manager.

CHELSEA have signed Italian international Gianfranco Zola from Parma for a fee of £4.5 million. He will be the third Italian to move to Stamford Bridge under manager Ruud Gullitt. Zola will join compatriots Gianluca Vialli and Roberto di Matteo. His four-year deal is set to net him around £25,000 a week. The clubs will also play two friendlies, the first on November 27, with the return next summer.

SCOTLAND have been ordered by Fifa to play Estonia, who failed to turn up for their World Cup tie in Tallinn on October 9 after a mix-up over timing. Scotland had believed they would be awarded a 3-0 victory, but the game's governing body ruled that the tie must be played before March 16. Scotland coach Craig Brown reacted philosophically: "It is winning matches that qualifies you in the World Cup. We didn't want handouts."

STAN COLLYMORE has been fined £20,000 by Liverpool — the largest financial penalty ever imposed on a player — after he failed to turn up to play for the reserve team last week. Anfield's wayward striker, for whom Liverpool manager Roy Evans paid Nottingham Forest £8.5 million 15 months ago, then a British record transfer fee, has also been warned over his future conduct.

DAVID BUSST of Coventry City, who suffered a compound fracture of the right leg during a match at Old Trafford in April, has retired from the game. The 29-year-old has undergone 14 operations since the horrific accident. Last week he was told by a specialist that he would not be able to play again at any level.

ED GIDDINS hopes to sign for a new county this week despite losing his appeal against a 19-month drugs ban. The former Sussex fast bowler cannot play first-class cricket until April 1998, but several counties have shown in interest in him. "I've boiled it down to a few choices," said the 25-year-old, who tested positive for cocaine last season. "I must take my punishment and come back a stronger person." Durham meanwhile have signed the 30-year-old Lancashire player Nick Speak on a three-year contract.

MICHAEL SCHUMACHER of Germany has extended his present contract with Ferrari for a further two years after next season at a fee believed to be $82 million. The twice Formula One world champion looks set to pass the $130 million mark with the Italian team in 1999 — the year he turns 30.

SCOTLAND'S snooker dream team of Stephen Hendry, John Higgins and Alan McManus won the World Cup with a 10-7 victory over the Republic of Ireland in Bangkok.

Germany 1 N Ireland 1

Hamilton finds right balance

Michael Walker in Nuremberg

IF Darren Anderton's shot had not come back off Andreas Köpke's post at Wembley in June but instead had settled in the back of the net, England would have won Euro 96.

Imagine then that England had drawn Northern Ireland in their World Cup qualifying group and that the first game back at Wembley was against Bryan Hamilton's collection of reserve-team journeymen.

Given that scenario and you get a sense of the triumphant expectation that greeted Germany in the Frankenstadion last Saturday.

But then Northern Ireland, with only a home defeat and a draw to their name, not only held out for that important first half-hour but also went on to score.

Admittedly Andreas Möller equalised immediately, thereby averting an upset of Mike Tyson-like proportions, but the Irish showed unbending resilience to register a famous draw.

Northern Ireland deserve huge admiration for their persistence in playing their way out of pressure situations. And this was pressure. At times the Germans may have lacked ingenuity but six on-target strikes in the opening 20 minutes, nine corners in the final quarter of an hour, are an indication of their passages of control.

Yet even in the late stages the Irish declined to hoof the ball away gratefully when a better option was to find Neil Lennon or Michael Hughes foraging away beyond the German midfield, or Iain Dowie striving manfully and successfully alone up front.

That trio and Ian Nolan were the only ones in the starting line-up playing regularly in the Premiership. For players like Steve Morrow at Arsenal and Colin Hill at Leicester, first-team football is a rarity, while the rest are not even big names in the Nationwide League.

But as a team, they get the balance right. Strangely, however, Northern Ireland seem capable only of doing this away from home. Perhaps it has something to do with atmosphere. That was not a problem here.

Forty thousand Germans sat stunned as Thomas Strunz's attempted clearance fell at the left foot of Gerry Taggart whose instant lash whipped past Köpke. It was a finish of power and precision, and the Bolton captain's sixth goal for Northern Ireland.

The euphoric mood lasted about 90 seconds. Möller's one-two with Bobic ended with the ball whistling past Tommy Wright. It had to be some shot to beat a goalkeeper having one of those nights in what was his first international for over two years. Wright managed to get fingers, fists and feet to everything.

● Wales suffered their worst international defeat in a competitive game when they lost 7-1 to Holland in Eindhoven. Among the scorers for the Dutch was Arsenal's Dennis Bergkamp, who netted a hat-trick.